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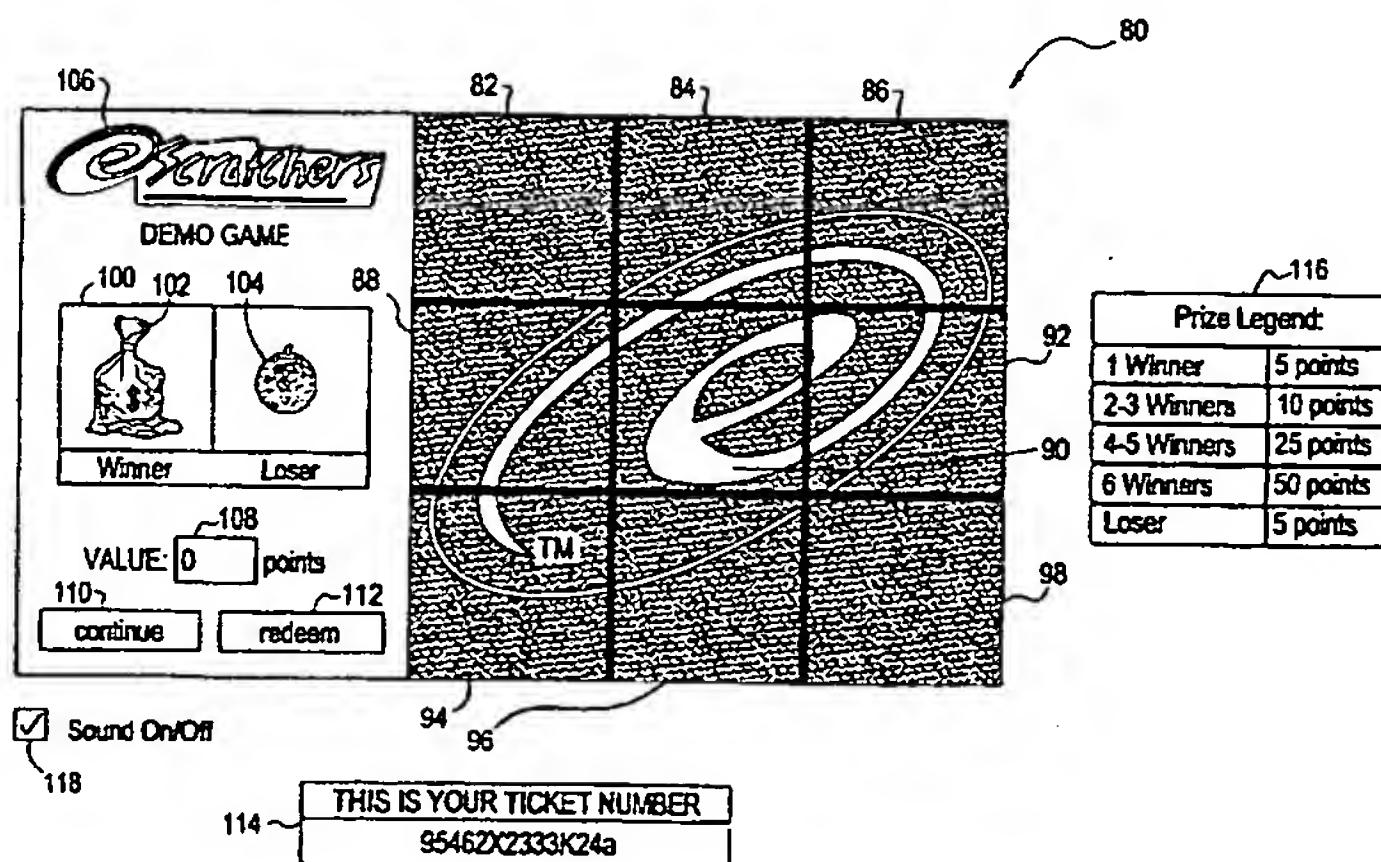
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(54) Title: COMPUTER SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR VIRTUAL REVEAL-AND-WIN GAME TICKET



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(57) Abstract: A computer system and method for a virtual reveal-and-win game ticket having a plurality of game segments selectable by a player of the game wherein the game ticket is capable of becoming a winning ticket and capable of becoming a losing ticket depending upon which of said game segments the player selects. To prevent unintentional selection of the game segments, the game player is preferably required to indicate a desire to continue play of the game ticket after a game segment has been selected, preferably by selecting a continue button located apart from an area of the game ticket comprising the game segments, before another game segment can be selected. For security reasons, the game ticket is preferably created "on the fly" after the game player has initiated play, and preferably by randomly selecting game segments one at a time for designating each game segment either a winner segment or a loser segment. The game ticket of the present invention is particularly well suited for gaming (i.e., gambling) applications (where permitted), as well as for use in promotions and incentives programs.

**COMPUTER SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR
VIRTUAL REVEAL-AND-WIN GAME TICKET**

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A wide variety of promotions and incentives programs have been practiced over time to entice individuals to perform or behave in a desired manner. For example, at the grand opening of a new retail store, it is not uncommon for free merchandise or entries into a prize drawing to be given away to every potential purchaser that visits the store. The purpose of doing so may be to draw attention to the new establishment and increase the number of potential purchasers that visit the store, both to increase sales while the promotion remains in effect and with the hope that each potential purchaser will become a regular customer. Likewise, in the employment environment, it is known to offer employees both monetary and non-monetary prizes as incentives for achieving certain job-related goals or milestones, such as those relating to job performance factors, company stock gains, personal attendance, years of service, etc.

More recently, promotions and incentives programs have been rendered and administered over the Internet and other public as well as private computer networks. Such programs commonly use virtual game tickets that are awarded to a participant=s account, for example, each time the participant logs onto a certain web site or downloads a new software application or, in the case of an employee incentives program, as an award for job-related goals or milestones. The virtual game tickets are modeled after the reveal-and-win game tickets sometimes employed by state lotteries and other enterprises, where an opaque, often silver or gold film is used to cover certain segments or squares of the game ticket and must be “scratched” or removed from game ticket (such as by using a coin) to reveal underlying prize symbols.

Similarly, in the on-line environment, a player must first “uncover@ the several squares of a virtual game ticket, such as by clicking on each square or by simulating the removal of an opaque file using a virtual coin or the like. The player can then determine whether the game ticket is a winner merely by observing what was revealed for each game square. For example, in the popular A3-of-a-kind@ format, the player may win 500 points (which may equate to five hundred dollars) if three of the uncovered game squares each state A500. @ In other formats, the player may be awarded 500 points if any of the uncovered game squares state A500, @ or may be awarded some other prize if a corresponding prize symbol is revealed in any of the game squares. Once play is complete, winning game tickets are typically redeemed for product coupons, gift certificates, merchandise offered in on-line catalogs, or even debit cards (in the case of monetary awards) that can be used like credit cards at participating locations.

The inventor hereof has identified a significant problem with the virtual game tickets described above, namely, that winning is not a function of the game squares selected by the player. Although the player must typically uncover all of the game squares as a prerequisite to winning, whether the game ticket is a winning ticket or a losing ticket
5 is merely a function of the attributes assigned to the game squares when the ticket was created, and was thus predetermined before play was commenced. A losing ticket is always a losing ticket, regardless of which (or the order that) squares are uncovered by the player. For these reasons, it is believed that the entertainment value of playing the game tickets is lacking. Losing players may often feel cheated, given that by the time they
10 started play, they had no chance whatsoever of winning, and may even question whether any winning game tickets exist. Furthermore, playing the game ticket is hardly challenging, as the only task required of the game player is to uncover the game squares and determine if, according to the specified format, the ticket is a winner. Nor is there any reason to study the game ticket after play is completed to determine whether it could have
15 been played differently, since there is only one way to play the ticket (i.e., uncover the game squares and see if the ticket is a winner).

A similar problem exists for many gaming (i.e., gambling) applications, including video slot and video poker machines, where the winning or losing status of the player is largely determined by the machine itself. For example, in the case of video poker, the
20 game player may have some limited control over his or her winning status because the player is typically allowed to choose which of the initially dealt playing cards the player would like to "hold," and which of those cards the player would like to exchange for new cards. Overall, however, whether the player ultimately wins a hand is a function of the particular cards that were dealt to that player. In other words, the player may often lose a
25 hand regardless of which cards, if any, the player initially decides to "hold." In this regard, players frequently refer to certain machines as "cold" or "hot" based on the players' perception of whether the machines are dealing winning hands (or a substantial number of them). These players often become frustrated with "cold" machines, believing such machines are incapable of dealing winning hands (or an acceptable number of them),
30 even though the "cold" machines may be operating according to the same random function as "hot" machines. Although described with respect to "machines," the same issues apply to many on-line gaming applications.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In order to solve these and other needs in the art, the inventor hereof has succeeded
35 at designing and developing a virtual game ticket where "every ticket is a winner." In other words, every game ticket of the present invention is capable of becoming a winning

ticket. Whether a particular ticket is, in fact, a winning ticket depends upon which of the squares on the game ticket the player uncovers. Therefore, the player always has an opportunity to win. For example, a virtual game ticket may be provided with nine squares, where each square depicts (once uncovered) either a bag of money or a bomb. Points or credits are earned each time the player uncovers a square depicting the bag of money, provided that a square depicting the bomb has not been uncovered. In this manner, the entertainment value and challenge provided by the virtual game ticket is markedly enhanced as compared to prior art game tickets and gaming machines, as the winning or losing status of the game ticket is under the control of the game player. Further, the game player is preferably allowed to redeem the game ticket for value as soon as a winner square is selected, but may also have the opportunity to uncover additional squares with the hope of winning additional rewards, but at the risk of losing some or all previously awarded points or credits in the event a loser square is selected, which adds an additional dimension to the virtual game ticket as compared to those of the prior art. Further still, the game player is likely to study the game ticket after play is terminated, particularly in the case of a losing ticket, to consider how the game ticket should have been played to win the maximum prize, and/or in an (unrealistic) effort to uncover the Alogic@ of the game ticket in the belief that this will contribute to the player's success with the next game ticket, thereby increasing the player's desire to play another game ticket. For all these reasons, the virtual game ticket of the present invention provides a greater entertainment experience and thought-provoking challenge for the game player. As a result, demand for and interest in this type of game ticket is enhanced which, in turn, enhances the successfulness of the overall gaming system, promotion, or incentives program with which the game ticket may be associated.

In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, a computerized method of playing a game comprises the step of creating a virtual game ticket capable of becoming a winning ticket and capable of becoming a losing ticket depending upon which of a plurality of game segments a player selects. The creating step preferably includes designating each game segment one of a winner segment and a lose segment before selection thereof by the game player. Preferably, the game ticket is designated a losing ticket once a threshold number of loser segments is selected by the game player, and is designated a winning ticket once at least one winner segment has been selected and said threshold number of loser segments has not been selected. The method may also include the step of awarding points to winning tickets based upon the number of winner segments selected by the game player. The creating step may also include identifying a predetermined sequence in which the game segments can be selected, where each game segment is designated one of a winner segment and a loser segment as a function of

whether the game segments are selected by the game player according to the predetermined sequence.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, a computer system configured to run a computer gam comprises a virtual game ticket having a plurality of game segments selectable by a player of the computer game, where the game ticket is capable of becoming a winning ticket and capable of becoming a losing ticket depending upon which of the game segments the player selects. The computer system is preferably configured to designate each game segment one of a winner segment and a loser segment before selection thereof by the game player. The computer system may also be configured to designate the game ticket a losing ticket when a threshold number of loser segments is selected by the game player. In one preferred embodiment of the invention, the threshold number of loser segments is one. The computer system is preferably configured such that the game ticket remains in a playable state until one of the following occurs: the threshold number of loser segments is selected by the game player; all the winner segments are selected by the game player; the game ticket is redeemed. The computer system may also be configured to redeem the game ticket when one of the following occurs: the threshold number of loser segments is selected by the game player; all winner segments are selected by the game player; the game player initiates redemption of the game ticket. The computer system is preferably connected to a distributed computer network for enabling use of the computer system by one or more geographically remote players, and preferably forms part of a computerized promotions or incentives program.

In accordance with still another aspect of the present invention, a computerized method of playing a computer game comprising a virtual game ticket having a plurality of game segments selectable by a game player includes the step of requiring the game player to indicate a desire to continue play of the game ticket before another game segment can be selected. The game segments are preferably selectable by the game player using a pointer and the game player is preferably required to move the pointer from an area comprising the game segments to indicate said desire. In one preferred embodiment, the game ticket includes a button adjacent to the game segment area and the game player is required to select this button to indicate the desire to continue play of the game ticket before another game segment can be selected.

In accordance with yet another aspect of the present invention, a method of creating a virtual game ticket having a plurality of game segments selectable by a player of the game comprises the step of creating the game ticket only after play of the game ticket is initiated by the game player. This method preferably includes the additional steps of randomly selecting one of said game segments, and assigning a prize symbol to the selected game segment. The method may also comprise the steps of computing odds for

the selected game segment, generating a random number, and comparing the odds with the random number to identify the prize symbol to be assigned to the selected game segment. The method preferably includes the additional step of comparing the prize symbol assignment with a game structure for the virtual game ticket to determine whether the 5 game structure has been violated. Preferably, the selecting and assigning steps are repeated until a prize symbol has been assigned to every game segment. Depending upon the format of the game, these assignments may be made before any of the game segments are selected by the game player.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, a gaming method 10 comprising the steps of accepting a wager from a player and displaying a virtual game ticket to the player, the game ticket having a plurality of game segments selectable by the player. The game ticket is capable of becoming a winning ticket and capable of becoming a losing ticket depending upon which of the plurality of game segments the player selects. The method also includes the steps of permitting the player to select at least one of the 15 game segments, determining whether the game ticket is a winning ticket or a losing ticket based upon which of the plurality of game segments the user selected, and paying an award to the player in the event that the game ticket is determined to be a winning ticket.

In accordance with still another aspect of the present invention, a gaming device 20 includes a display unit, a mechanism for receiving monetary credits from a player of the system, at least one memory element having computer instructions stored therein, and a processor for implementing the computer instructions stored in the memory element. The computer instructions configure the device for accepting a monetary wager from the player, and for displaying on the display unit a virtual game ticket having a plurality of game segments selectable by the player. The game ticket is capable of becoming a winning ticket and capable of becoming a losing ticket depending upon which of the plurality of game segments the player selects. The gaming device also includes a user 25 input device through which the player can select at least one of the plurality of game segments, and a mechanism for paying an award to the player in the event the virtual game ticket is determined to be a winning ticket.

30 In accordance with yet another aspect of the present invention, a computerized gaming system is configured for accepting a monetary wager from a player of the system, and for displaying to the player a virtual game ticket. The virtual game ticket is capable of becoming a winning ticket and capable of becoming a losing ticket depending upon which of the plurality of game segments the player selects. The gaming system is also 35 configured for determining whether the game ticket is a winning ticket based upon which of the plurality of game segments the player selects, and for paying an award to the player in the event the game ticket is determined to be a winning ticket.

While the principal advantages and features of the present invention have been explained above, a greater and more thorough understanding of the invention may be attained by referring to the drawings and the detailed description of preferred embodiments which follow.

5 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 illustrates a virtual reveal-and-win game ticket according to one embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 2 is a flow chart illustrating how play of the game ticket shown in Figure 1 is executed.

10 Figure 3 illustrates the game ticket shown in Figure 1 after a winner game segment has been selected by the game player.

Figure 4 illustrates the game ticket shown in Figure 3 after a second winner game segment has been selected.

15 Figure 5 illustrates the game ticket shown in Figure 4 after a loser game segment has been selected by the game player.

Figure 6 illustrates the game ticket shown in Figure 5 after all unselected game segments are revealed as winner or loser segments.

Figure 7 is a flow chart illustrating how creation of the game ticket shown in Figure 1 is executed.

20 Figure 8 is a flow chart illustrating the processing that takes place within block 168 of Figure 7.

Figure 9 is a perspective view of a standalone gaming machine according to one embodiment of the invention.

25 Figure 10 illustrates an exemplary awards legend for the standalone gaming machine shown in Figure 9.

Figure 11 is a block diagram of a computer network used in an on-line gaming implementation of the present invention.

Corresponding reference characters indicate corresponding features throughout the several views of the drawings.

30 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

As will be apparent to those skilled in the art, the virtual game tickets and methods described herein can be implemented using any appropriately configured computer system, including a system comprising one or more personal computers. In one preferred embodiment, the computer system employed is connected to the Internet, and is used to host a web site through which the virtual game tickets can be accessed. A copy of the

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preferred computer code for this system is attached hereto as Appendix A. It should be understood, however, that it is not necessary for the computer system to be connected to the Internet, or to any other public or private network. On the contrary, the teachings of the present invention can also be implemented using, for example, a stand-alone device 5 such as a gaming device having limited computing power, as further described below. Thus, any particular computer system or configuration described herein should not be interpreted in a limiting sense. Additionally, the various tasks and processing required to implement the teachings of the present invention could be shared among multiple computers including, for example, a host computer and a game player's computer. In one 10 preferred embodiment, however, all processes required to create and administer play of the virtual game tickets are performed by a single computer for purposes of security and control.

An exemplary virtual game ticket according to one aspect of the present invention is shown in Figure 1 and is referred to generally by reference character 80. Specifically, 15 Figure 1 depicts what may be displayed on the video monitor of a player's computer that is connected via the Internet to a computer administering the virtual game ticket 80 pursuant to, for example, an on-line gaming (i.e., gambling) system (where legal), or as part of a promotions or incentives program. As shown in Figure 1, the game ticket 80 includes a plurality of game segments 82, 84, 86, 88, 90, 92, 94, 96, 98 which, in this embodiment, 20 are arranged adjacent to one another in a three-by-three matrix. The game segments are sometimes referred to herein as Agame squares@. It should be understood, however, that the phrase Agame squares@ is not intended to limit the particular shape or placement of the game segments. For the particular game ticket 80 shown in Figure 1, each game segment is designated either a Awinner@ segment or a Aloser@ segment when the game 25 ticket 80 is created, and these designations are initially concealed from the game player, preferably using one or more graphics customized for the particular gaming, promotions or incentives program at issue. A graphics legend 100 is provided to display a prize symbol 102 (in this case, a bag of money) that identifies a game segment as a winner segment, and a prize symbol 104 (in this case, a bomb) that identifies a game segment as a loser 30 segment. As should be apparent, a wide variety of other prize symbols could be used, including those identifying the particular prize to be awarded the game player for selecting one or more game segments containing such prize symbol. A game title 106 is displayed above the graphics legend 100 and can be customized for any given application. Displayed below the legend 100 is the current score 108 for the game ticket which, in this 35 example, is displayed in terms of Apoints. For gaming applications, the current score is preferably displayed in terms of "credits," as explained below. Also provided on the game ticket 80 are a Acontinue@ button 110 and a Aredeem@ button 112, both of which are

selectable by the game player, as explained below. Figure 1 also illustrates a unique ticket number 114, a prize legend 116 and a sound button 118 which are preferably displayed adjacent to the virtual game ticket 80.

The format of the particular exemplary virtual game ticket 80 shown in Figure 1 is
5 as follows: the game ticket 80 has a total of nine game segments (as noted above); six of the nine game segments are designated as Awinner@ segments, and three of the nine game segments are designated as ALoser@ segments. The game ticket 80 is designated a ALosing ticket@ when a threshold number of loser segments are selected by the game player. In this example, the threshold number is one, such that the ticket 80 is designated a
10 losing ticket as soon as one loser segment is selected. The game ticket 80 is designated a AWinning ticket@ when one or more winner segments have been selected, provided that the threshold number of loser segments has not been selected. If the first game segment selected by the player is a winner segment, points are awarded to the ticket according to the prize legend 116, and the player can proceed to select another game segment, in the
15 hopes of selecting another winner segment to thereby obtain additional points.

Alternatively, the player can ACash out@ by selecting the redeem button 112, which terminates play of the game ticket 80 and transfers the awarded points to the player's account. If play is continued after one or more winner segments are selected and the player then selects a loser segment, what was formerly a winning ticket becomes a losing
20 ticket, and the number of points awarded to the ticket, as shown in the current score 108, is changed according to the prize legend 116. For the particular game ticket 80 shown in Figure 1, five points are awarded to a losing ticket as a consolation prize.

A flow chart showing how play of the virtual game ticket 80 is executed is illustrated in Figure 2. After the game player requests to play the game from a main menu,
25 the game ticket 80 is displayed to the game player at block 130. Processing then proceeds to block 132, where the computer system waits for the player to make a selection. If the player proceeds to select one of the game segments 82-98 shown in Figure 1, processing branches to block 134 to determine whether the game ticket 80 is in a ALocked@ state. If the game ticket 80 is not in the locked state, then processing continues to block 136 where
30 either the winner symbol 102 or the loser symbol 104 is displayed in the game segment selected by the player, depending upon whether the selected game segment was designated a winner segment or a loser segment when the game ticket 80 was created. At block 136, the current score 108 for the ticket 80 is also updated according to whether the selected square is a winner square or a loser square, and according to the point allocation set forth
35 in the prize legend 116. An example of this is shown in Figure 3, which illustrates the selection of game segment 96 by the game player. Because this game segment was designated a winner segment when the game ticket 80 was created, the winner symbol 102

is displayed in game segment 96, and the current score 108 is updated to reflect that the player has earned five points.

Referring again to Figure 2, processing proceeds on to block 138 to determine whether the game ticket 80 remains in a Aplayable state,@ i.e., whether the player has 5 selected the threshold number (in this example, one) of loser segments, all of the winner segments, or the redeem button 112. If the game ticket 80 remains in the playable state, then processing continues to block 140 where the game ticket is locked. Processing then branches back to block 132 where the computer system waits for the player to take further action.

10 At this point in the processing, if the game player attempts to select another game square, execution will again branch to block 134 where the system will determine that the game ticket is locked. As a result, processing will proceed to block 142 where preferably a message such as, AYou must select CONTINUE to play on or REDEEM to cash in your ticket now,@ is conveyed to the game player before processing again returns to block 132.
15 Thus, the game player must indicate a desire to continue play of the game ticket (in this example, by selecting the continue button 110) before another game segment can be selected. In response to the message provided at block 142, the game player should be prompted to select the continue button 110 shown in Figure 1, thus causing processing to proceed to block 144 where the game ticket 80 is unlocked before returning again to block
20 132.

Note that the continue button 110 shown in Figure 1 is preferably located away from the area comprising the game segments 82-98. As a result, in order to select the continue button 110 using a suitable user command input device (such as a computer mouse, joystick, keyboard, touch screen, etc.), the game player must remove the on-screen cursor (not shown) controlled by the input device, or the game player's hand in the case of a touch screen, from the area comprising the game segments. This reduces the likelihood of the game player inadvertently selecting multiple game segments when intending to select only one, and also requires the player to take at least some additional time to consider whether play should be continued. In this manner, the continue button 110 serves 25 to prevent the game player from selecting one of the game segments through inattention or inadvertence, which could otherwise taint the player's game experience (and thus the effectiveness of the promotion or incentives program, if applicable), especially where the game player would be likely to blame the system for the erroneous or inadvertent selection. As stated above, an important feature of the virtual game ticket of the present 30 invention is that whether the ticket is a winning ticket or a losing ticket is under the control of the game player. It is for this and other reasons that measures are taken to prevent game
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segments from being selected (which can result in a losing ticket) in any manner other than deliberately by the game player.

If after selecting the continue button 110, the player selects another game segment, the system will process this selection in the same manner described above. For example, 5 after selecting game segment 96 as shown in Figure 3, the player may proceed (after selecting the continue button 110) to select game segment 92. Because this game segment was also designated a winner segment when the game ticket 80 was created, the winner symbol 102 is displayed in game segment 92, and the current score 108 is updated to reflect that the player has now earned ten points, as shown in Fig. 4.

10 With further reference to Figure 2, if the user selects the redeem button 112 shown in Figure 1, processing branches to block 146 where the computer system determines whether the current score 108 is greater than zero. Note that, in this example, points are awarded even to a losing ticket. Thus, if the current score 108 of the ticket is zero, this means that none of the game segments has yet been selected by the game player, and 15 processing will revert to block 132, as shown in Figure 2. On the other hand, if the current score 108 is greater than zero points, processing in this example will proceed to block 148 where each unselected game segment is revealed as either a winner segment or a loser segment. In this example, the game segments are revealed as such by displaying, for each segment shown in Figure 1, either the winner symbol 102 or the loser symbol 104.

20 Processing then proceeds to block 150, where the points awarded to the game ticket 80, as shown in the current score 108, are transferred to the player's personal account, before processing returns to the main menu as shown in block 152.

Referring again to block 138, if in this specific example, the game player selects a loser segment or the sixth winner segment, then the computer system will determine that 25 the game ticket 80 is no longer in a playable state, and processing will branch to block 148 where any unselected game segments are revealed as winner segments or loser segments, as explained above. Examples of this are shown in Figures 5 and 6. If, after selecting game segment 92 as shown in Figure 4, the player proceeds to select game segment 86, the loser symbol 104 will be displayed in game segment 86, as shown in Figure 5, assuming 30 this segment was designated a loser segment when the game ticket 80 was created.

Additionally, the current score 108, which had reached ten points as shown in Figure 4, is reduced to five points in accordance with the prize legend 116. According to the format for this particular game, because one of the loser segments (namely, loser segment 86) has been selected, the game ticket 80 is no longer in the playable state. Thus, according to 35 block 148 shown in Figure 2, all of the unselected game segments are revealed as either winner or losing segments, as shown in Figure 6, depending upon how these segments were designated when the game ticket 80 was created. Revealing the game segments in

this manner allows the game player to witness that the ticket could, in fact, have become a winning ticket if played differently. Figure 6 also illustrates how the unselected game segments 82, 84, 88, 90, 94, 98 are graphically distinguished from the selected game segments 86, 92, 96 to facilitate the player's review of the game ticket 80. In this 5 particular example, the unselected game segments 82, 84, 88, 90, 94, 98 are shaded to distinguish them from selected game segments 86, 92, 96. The number of points earned by the game player (i.e., five points in this example) are also displayed in the current score 108, and these points are credited to the player's personal account.

Referring to Figure 7, a flow chart is provided to illustrate the manner in which the 10 exemplary game ticket 80 shown in Figure 1 is created by the computer system.

Preferably, the game ticket 80 is created Aon the fly@ when the ticket is requested by the game player at block 158, and not beforehand. In this manner, the security of the game system is improved, as there is no means for a game player to hack into the system or determine in any other manner which squares of any particular ticket have been designated 15 as winner squares.

At block 160, the game structure for the ticket to be created is loaded. For the game ticket 80 shown in Figure 1, the game structure includes the number of game segments or squares to be included on the game ticket, the number of those squares that should be designated winners, and the number of those squares that should be designated 20 losers, as well as the prize allocation to be displayed in the prize legend 116 and used by the system to determine the current score 108. Processing then proceeds to block 162 where the new game ticket is assigned a unique identification number for tracking purposes. Execution then proceeds to block 164, where the system determines whether every square of the new game ticket has been designated a winner or a loser. If not, 25 processing will continue to block 166 where the system will randomly select one of the squares of the new game ticket (but not any squares previously selected at block 166 for the game ticket being created). At block 168, the computer system designates the square selected in block 166 either a winner or a loser according to the process shown in Figure 8 and described below. At block 170, the system determines whether, according to the game 30 structure loaded in block 160, all of the winner squares have already been designated. If so, then processing branches to block 172, where the square selected in block 166 is designated a loser regardless of whether that square was designated a winner or a loser in block 168. In this manner, the system ensures the game structure is not violated. If the system determines at block 170 that all of the winners have not yet been designated for the 35 game ticket, then the designation made in block 168 is at least temporarily preserved, and processing continues to block 174 where the system determines whether all of the loser squares have already been designated. If so, then processing branches to block 176, where

the square selected in block 166 is designated a winner regardless of whether that square was designated a winner or loser at block 168. If the system determines at block 174 that all of the loser segments have not yet been designated, then the designation made at block 168 is preserved, and processing simply branches back to block 164. At this point, the
5 system determines whether additional squares still need to be designated either a winner or a loser, and will repeat the process described immediately above until all of the squares of the new game ticket have been so designated. Processing then branches to block 178, where the new game ticket is displayed to the game player, preferably in conjunction with the unique ticket number assigned in block 162 as well as the prize legend 116 shown in
10 Figure 1, which corresponds to the prize allocation loaded in block 160 of Figure 7.

Figure 8 is a flow chart illustrating the processing that takes place within block 168 shown in Figure 7. At block 190, the system computes the odds to be used in determining whether the square selected in block 166 in Figure 7 should be designated a winner square or a loser square. These odds are preferably computed according to the following
15 equation: *Current odds = previous odds * (available winners/available squares) * 100* where: A previous odds@ refers to the Acurrent odds@ that was used in the most recent prior processing of a square from the same ticket (for the first square that is processed, the Aprevious odds@ is set to 1); Available winners@ refers to the number of winning squares to be designated for the game ticket according to the game structure minus the
20 numbers of squares that have already been designated winners; and Available squares@ refers to the total number of squares for the game ticket minus the number of squares already processed (not including the current square being processed) minus the number of squares already designated losers. Thus, for a game ticket having a total of nine squares, six of which are winners and three of which are losers, when the first square is processed,
25 the Available winners@ is six and the Available squares@ is nine such that the Acurrent odds@ is 66.6.

As apparent to those skilled in the art, the equation set forth above starts with the natural probability of designating a game square a winning square (i.e., a 66.6% chance for a game ticket where six of the nine squares will be designated winner squares), but then
30 adjusts this probability as a function of whether the prior designations have followed or deviated from this natural probability. In this manner, the equation reduces the likelihood that the system will assign the same designation to, for example, the first three or last three squares processed on any given game ticket. Additionally, randomly choosing the squares for processing, which is done at block 166 in Figure 7, serves to prevent the system from
35 consistently processing adjacent squares successively. As a result of these features, the probability that any given square on a game ticket will be designated a winner square or a loser square is approximately the same as that for every other square.

At block 192, the system randomly generates a number between 1 and 100, and this number is compared in block 194 with the current odds computed in block 190. If the random number is greater than the current odds, then processing branches to block 196 and the square being processed is designated a loser. If, on the other hand, the random number 5 is less than the current odds, then processing branches to block 198 and the square being processed is designated a winner.

As noted above, the present invention can be implemented via a web site that individuals access remotely through the Internet using their personal computers. In one particular Internet embodiment, the virtual game ticket is implemented in the form of a 10 movie using the well-known Shockwave Player™ technology available from Macromedia, Inc. (<http://shockwave.com>). Upon detecting a user's desire to play a game ticket, the web server begins downloading the "movie" (in the form of a ".dcr" file) to the user's computer. Once the electronic movie file is downloaded, it communicates with the web server to initialize a new game ticket. In response, the server generates the particulars of a 15 new game ticket, including the unique ticket number, and then forwards this data to the movie file as a text string. Upon receiving the text string in the proper format, the movie file uses the string to build the layout of icons for the game segments of the new game ticket (these are the icons which are hidden from the user until the user selects the game segments with which they are associated, as described above). The virtual game ticket is 20 then displayed to the user in a ready-to-play state. Implementing the virtual game ticket in this manner is believed to enhance the overall security of the system, as apparent to those skilled in the art.

Although the virtual game ticket 80 shown in the figures has been described above with respect to a particular game structure, there are a number of changes that could be 25 made to this structure without departing from the scope of the invention. For example, the number of squares provided on the game ticket could be varied, the number of available winner and loser segments could be altered, and the number of points or credits awarded for uncovering winner segments could likewise be changed. Additionally, the number of loser segments required to be selected before play is terminated (which was only one in the 30 preceding example) could be increased, and the game segments could be designated winner or loser segments other than in accordance with the current odds formula set forth above.

It should also be clear that there are numerous other formats which can be 35 implemented without departing from the Aevery ticket is a winner@ format. For example, rather than designating each game segment either a winner segment or a loser segment when the virtual game ticket is created, the system could instead assign sequential numbers to the game segments, and require the game player to select one or more game

segments according to the predetermined sequence before the game ticket is designated a winning ticket. In this alternative embodiment, each game segment could be reevaluated and declared either a winner segment or a loser segment after each selection of a game segment by the game player, and as a function of whether that game segment is the next 5 segment required to be selected by the game player according to the predetermined sequence.

A standalone “pay for play” gaming machine according to another preferred embodiment of the present invention is shown in Fig. 9 and designated generally by reference character 200. As shown in Fig. 9, the preferred gaming machine 200 includes a 10 kiosk structure or housing 202 which supports a video display unit 204, a joystick 206, and several user-activatable buttons 208, 210, 212, 213 described further below. The preferred gaming machine 200 also includes a coin mechanism 214, a smart card reader 216 and a mechanism 218 for paying awards to players as described below. Preferably, the gaming machine 200 is operated in substantially the same manner as well-known video slot and 15 poker machines, except for the details of the games themselves.

In this embodiment, a prospective player must initially establish monetary credits with the machine 200. This can be done by feeding one or more “coins” (including, for purposes of this disclosure, coin currency as well as casino tokens and the like) into the coin mechanism 214, or by inserting a “smart card” (i.e., a rechargeable card that stores, 20 on the card itself, an amount of credit purchased and not yet redeemed) into the smart card reader 216. Note that the coin mechanism 214 and the smart card reader 216 are the only mechanisms provided on the preferred gaming machine 200 for accepting monetary credits from players, as coins (including tokens) and smart cards are typically the only form of payment accepted by casino machines. It should be understood, however, that other types 25 of mechanisms for receiving monetary credits from players can also be used if desired, including dollar bill readers, credit card (including debit card) readers, etc. It should also be understood that non-monetary credits (i.e., credits that do not equate to real currency) can be used without departing from the scope of the present invention.

The number of coins received by the machine 200, or the number of equivalent 30 credits transferred from any smart card inserted into the smart card reader 216, are included in the “total credits” figure that is preferably displayed on the video display unit 204, as shown in Fig. 9. The prospective player may then be prompted to make a monetary wager before game play can begin. The player is preferably allowed to select the amount of this monetary wager within a predetermined range of wagers. In this 35 particular embodiment, the player can wager between one and five credits on each game ticket. To input a wager between one and four credits, the player can depress the single-credit button 210 between one and four times, respectively. To input a wager of five

credits (the maximum wager, in this embodiment), the player can either depress the single-credit button 210 five times, or depress the maximum-credit button 212 one time. The amount of the wager selected by the player is preferably displayed on the video display unit 204 as the "current wager" figure. Preferably, the gaming machine 200 is configured to award credits to the player each time a certain number of winner segments are selected, and the amount of credits awarded to the player during play of any given game ticket is displayed on the video display unit 204 as the "current award" figure, as shown in Fig. 9.

Once a wager is made, a virtual game ticket of the type shown in Fig. 1 is preferably displayed on the video display unit 204, as shown in Fig. 9. The player can then initially select one of the game segments by using the joystick 206 to control a cursor 220 provided in the video display. After placing the cursor 220 onto a particular game segment, the player can select that game segment, and reveal the hidden icon associated with that game segment, by depressing the "select" button 208. Preferably, the player must select the "continue" button shown on the video display in Fig. 9 (using the joystick 206 and the "select" button 208) before another game segment can be selected so as to prevent the player from making an inadvertent selection. In this particular embodiment, the player may also select the "redeem" button on the video display to terminate play of the current game ticket and add the amount of any "current award" to the "total credits" figure. Each time play of a game ticket is terminated (e.g., because the player selected all or a threshold number of winner segments, or a threshold number of loser segments, or the "redeem" button), the amount of any "current award" is automatically added to the "total credits" figure. The player will then be prompted to place a new wager before play of the next game ticket can begin. The player is also permitted to select the "cash out" button 213 at any time. If a smart card is inserted into the smart card reader 216 when the "cash out" button is depressed, the gaming machine preferably adds to this smart card the sum of the "total credits" and "current award" figures shown on the video display when the "cash out" button was depressed. If, alternatively, a smart card is not detected in the smart card reader 216, the preferred gaming machine will dispense, via the payout mechanism 218, a number of coins corresponding to the sum of the "total credits" and "current award" figures shown in the video display when the "cash out" button was depressed.

Although the preferred gaming machine employs a joystick 206 and user-activatable buttons 208-213 for permitting players to make selections, it should be understood that any other user input devices can be used for this purpose.

As apparent to those skilled in the art, the gaming machine 200 includes at least one memory element having computer instructions stored therein, and a processor (shown in phantom in Fig. 9) for implementing those instructions. The instructions preferably configure the gaming machine 200 to operate in the manner described. In this particular

embodiment, where the gaming machine 200 is a standalone machine, the computer instructions are permanently stored in a read-only memory (ROM) device (shown in phantom in Fig. 9), and are copied to a random access memory (RAM) device (also shown in phantom in Fig. 9) during operation of the gaming machine. The gaming machine 200 5 may also be connected or networked with one or more additional gaming machines and/or a central computer system, such as for monitoring purposes. In lieu of storing all of its computer instructions in ROM, the gaming machine 200 may also receive some or all of those instructions from the central computer system.

Provided in Fig. 10 is an exemplary awards legend for the preferred gaming 10 machine 200 shown in Fig. 9. This awards legend can be placed in a conspicuous location on the housing 202 of the gaming machine 200 or, more preferably, displayed on the video display unit 204 at least when the player is prompted to place a wager. As can be seen in Fig. 10, the amount of the award to the player for selecting winner segments on a game ticket is preferably a function of both the wager placed on that game ticket and the number 15 of winner segments successfully uncovered by the player. Of course, a wide variety of awards schemes can be implemented for the gaming machine shown in Fig. 9. For example, the machine can be configured such that no award is given to the player unless all (or a minimum number) of winner segments are selected. In cases where such an “all or nothing” award scheme is used, both the “current award” figure and the “redeem” 20 button are preferably eliminated from the video display. Preferably, the gaming machine 200 is also configured to permit the player to select a desired awards legend (from a list of such legends) that will govern the amount of monetary credits awarded to the player if the game ticket to be played becomes a winning ticket. For example, one player may select an “all or nothing” awards legend that pays a substantial award if all winner segments are 25 selected, but no award short of that, while another player may select an awards legend that pays some award if only one or two winner segments are selected, and a higher but still modest award if all winner segments are uncovered. In this manner, a variety of risk tolerances among players can be accommodated. Additionally, players are preferable prompted to increase their wagers each time (or at least the first one or two times) that a 30 winner segment is selected, since many players may be more willing to wager greater amounts after experiencing some level of success while playing a particular game ticket.

Although not shown in Fig. 10, the awards scheme can also be such that, if desired, nominal awards are paid to players of losing tickets. Further, in one preferred embodiment of the invention, players of losing tickets may be randomly selected to receive a monetary 35 award, additional credits, or some other prize. In this manner, players can hope to win some award or prize for each and every play of a game ticket, even if that game ticket becomes a losing ticket. Similarly, consolation points can be awarded to losing tickets,

accrued by players, and subsequently redeemed for additional game plays, merchandise, travel packages, etc.

Fig. 11 illustrates an on-line gaming embodiment of the present invention, where a central computer system 300 is connected to several exemplary remote computers 302, 5 304, 306, 308 through a communication network 310. The communication network 310 can be any public or private network. In one preferred implementation, the communication network 310 is the Internet, and the central computer system 300 includes a web server for hosting a web site accessible by each of the remote computers 302-308 at the same time. The remote computers 302-308 may be dedicated gaming computers located in casinos, 10 nightclubs, or other establishments, or personal computers through which individuals can selectively access the central computer system 300 from their homes, businesses, or other locations. The gaming operation in this online implementation is preferably the same as that for the standalone gaming machine 200 described above with reference to Fig. 9, with the notable exception that payments to and from players are preferably made via credit 15 card (including debit card) accounts. When logging on to the central computer system 300, players are preferably permitted to purchase a specified number of monetary gaming credits. The central computer system will then debit the player's credit card account accordingly, and credit an on-line gaming account for the player with the purchased number of credits, which the player can then use for placing wagers on virtual game 20 tickets as described above. When the player decides to "cash out" (or when the player's connection to the central computer system 300 is terminated), the central computer system preferably credits the player's credit card account in an amount corresponding to any monetary gaming credits accrued by that player.

It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that many modifications of the above-
25 described exemplary embodiments are possible within the spirit of the invention. Therefore, the scope of the invention should be determined by reference to the claims set forth below and their full range of equivalents under applicable law.

18 APPENDIX
game_source.txt

```
<html>

<head>
    <title>eGames Demo - Play The Games!</title>
    <link REL="StyleSheet" HREF="default.css" type="text/css">

<script>

var blnPlayable = 1
var blnScratching = 0
var blnPlaySound = 1
var intTileCount = 0
var intTicketValue = 0
var timages= new Array();
var pimages= new Array();
var wimages= new Array();
var strTiles
var blnLocked = 0
var blnState = 1
var blnBonus = 0

for (i = 0; i < 10; i++)
{
    timages[i] = 0;
    pimages[i] = 0;
    wimages[i] = 0;
}

wimages[1] = 'winner';
wimages[2] = 'winner';
wimages[3] = 'winner';
wimages[4] = 'winner';
wimages[5] = 'winner';
wimages[6] = 'winner';

function ChooseCell()
{
    var intCell

    do
    {
        intCell = (Math.round(Math.random() * 9) + 1);

        if (intCell < 1)
            intCell = 1;

        if (intCell > 9)
            intCell = 9;
    }
}
```

```
while (pimages[intCell] == 1);

pimages[intCell] = 1;

return intCell;

}

function ReplaceChar(s,p,v)
{
    var r

    r = '';

    if (p > 1)
        r = s.substring(0,p-1);

    r = r + v + s.substr(p);

    return r
}

BuildTicket(9,6)

function BuildTicket(intCells, intWinners)
{
    var t
    var odds = 1
    var intWinnerCount = 0
    var intLoserCount = 0
    var intTile

    strTiles = '000000000';

    for (t = 1; t < (intCells+1); t++)
    {
        intTile = ChooseCell();
        if (intWinnerCount != intWinners)
        {
            odds = odds * ((intWinners-intWinnerCount)/((intCells+1)-t-intLoserCount));
        }

        intWinner = (Math.round(Math.random() * 100) +
1);

        if (intWinnerCount == intWinners)
        {
            strTiles = ReplaceChar(strTiles,intTile
,'L');
        }
    }
}
```

```
        intLoserCount = intLoserCount + 1;
    }
    else if (intLoserCount == (intCells-intWinners))
    {
        strTiles = ReplaceChar(strTiles,intTile
, intWinnerCount+1);
        intWinnerCount = intWinnerCount + 1;
    }
    else if (intWinner < (odds*100))
    {
        strTiles = ReplaceChar(strTiles
, intTile,intWinnerCount+1);
        intWinnerCount = intWinnerCount
+ 1;
    }
    else
    {
        strTiles = ReplaceChar(
strTiles,intTile,'L');
        intLoserCount = intLose
rCount + 1;
    }
}
// alert(strTiles);
}

function ShowTicket(x,y)
{
    var t
    var strChar
    var strTile
    var imgName

    strTiles = x;
    blnPlayable = 0;
    blnLocked = 1;

    for (t = 1; t < 10; t++)
    {

        strChar = strTiles.substr(t-1,1);
        strTile = y.substr(t-1,1);

        if (t==1)
            imgName = 'TICKET_R1_C1';
        if (t==2)
            imgName = 'TICKET_R1_C2';
        if (t==3)
            imgName = 'TICKET_R1_C3';
        if (t==4)
```

game_source.txt

```
        imgName = 'TICKET_R2_C1';
if (t==5)
    imgName = 'TICKET_R2_C2';
if (t==6)
    imgName = 'TICKET_R2_C3';
if (t==7)
    imgName = 'TICKET_R3_C1';
if (t==8)
    imgName = 'TICKET_R3_C2';
if (t==9)
    imgName = 'TICKET_R3_C3';

if (strChar != 'L')
{
    if (strTile == 'U')
        document[imgName].src = 'Games/Default/Images/' + w
images[strChar] + '.gif';
    else
        document[imgName].src = 'Games/Default/Images'
/' + wimages[strChar] + '2.gif';
}
else
{
    if (strTile == 'U')
        document[imgName].src = 'Games/Default/Images/loser
.gif';
    else
        document[imgName].src = 'Games/Default/Images/loser
2.gif';
}
if (l > 0)
    alert('');
if (l < 0)
    alert('');

}

function Scratch(imgName)
{
    var intWinner
    var strChar
    var MyTimeOut
    var strOChar

    if (imgName == 'TICKET_R1_C1')
        intTileNumber = 1;
    if (imgName == 'TICKET_R1_C2')
        intTileNumber = 2;
    if (imgName == 'TICKET_R1_C3')
        intTileNumber = 3;
```

game_source.txt

```
if (imgName == 'TICKET_R2_C1')
    intTileNumber = 4;
if (imgName == 'TICKET_R2_C2')
    intTileNumber = 5;
if (imgName == 'TICKET_R2_C3')
    intTileNumber = 6;
if (imgName == 'TICKET_R3_C1')
    intTileNumber = 7;
if (imgName == 'TICKET_R3_C2')
    intTileNumber = 8;
if (imgName == 'TICKET_R3_C3')
    intTileNumber = 9;

if (timages[intTileNumber] == 1)
    blnScratching = 1;

if (blnScratching == 0)
    if (blnPlayable == 1)
        if (blnState == 0)
            alert('You must hit CONTINUE to play on
or REDEEM to cash in your ticket now.');
        else
        {
            SetState(0);

            blnScratching = 1;
            intWinner = Math.round((Math.random() *
100) + 1);
            strChar = strTiles.substr(intTileNumber
-1,1);
            stroChar = strChar

            if (intTileCount < 6)
            {
                timages[intTileNumber] = 1;
                intTileCount = intTileCount + 1
;
            }

            if (strChar != 'L')
            {
                if (wimages[strChar] ==
'instant') blnBonus=1;

                document[imgName].filters[0].Apply();
                document[imgName].src = 'Games/Default/Images/' +
wimages[strChar] + '.gif';
                document[imgName].filters[0].Play()

                PlaySound(0);
            }
        }
    }
}
```

game_source.txt

```
if (intTileCount == 1)
    intTicketValue = 5;
if (intTileCount == 2)
    intTicketValue = 10;
if (intTileCount == 3)
    intTicketValue = 10;
if (intTileCount == 4)
    intTicketValue = 25;
if (intTileCount == 5)
    intTicketValue = 25;
if (intTileCount == 6)
{
    intTicketValue = 50;
    PlaySound(3);
    blnPlayable=0;
    MyTimeOut = setTimeout ("Redeem(1);", 3000);
}

}
else
{
    document[imgName].filters.revealTrans.Apply();
    document[imgName].src =
'Games/Default/Images/loser.gif';
    document[imgName].filters.revealTrans.Play()
        PlaySound(1);
        blnPlayable = 0;
        intTicketValue = 5;
        MyTimeOut = setTimeout
("Redeem(1);", 3000);
}

}
document.TICKETFORM.TICKETVALUE.value = intTicketValue;
}

blnScratching = 0;
}

function SetState(x)
{
    if (blnScratching == 0)
        if (blnPlayable == 1)
        {

            if (x == 0)
            {
                document['TICKET_R1_C1'].style.cursor =
```

```
'default';
    document['TICKET_R1_C2'].style.cursor =
'default';
    document['TICKET_R1_C3'].style.cursor =
'default';
    document['TICKET_R2_C1'].style.cursor =
'default';
    document['TICKET_R2_C2'].style.cursor =
'default';
    document['TICKET_R2_C3'].style.cursor =
'default';
    document['TICKET_R3_C1'].style.cursor =
'default';
    document['TICKET_R3_C2'].style.cursor =
'default';
    document['TICKET_R3_C3'].style.cursor =
'default';
    blnState = 0;
    PlaySound(4);
}

if (x == 1)
{
    document['TICKET_R1_C1'].style.cursor =
'hand';
    document['TICKET_R1_C2'].style.cursor =
'hand';
    document['TICKET_R1_C3'].style.cursor =
'hand';
    document['TICKET_R2_C1'].style.cursor =
'hand';
    document['TICKET_R2_C2'].style.cursor =
'hand';
    document['TICKET_R2_C3'].style.cursor =
'hand';
    document['TICKET_R3_C1'].style.cursor =
'hand';
    document['TICKET_R3_C2'].style.cursor =
'hand';
    document['TICKET_R3_C3'].style.cursor =
'hand';
    blnState = 1;
    PlaySound(4);
}

if (x == 2)
{
    document['TICKET_R1_C1'].style.cursor =
'hand';
    document['TICKET_R1_C2'].style.cursor =
'hand';
```

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game_source.txt

```
        document['TICKET_R1_C3'].style.cursor =
        document['TICKET_R2_C1'].style.cursor =
        document['TICKET_R2_C2'].style.cursor =
        document['TICKET_R2_C3'].style.cursor =
        document['TICKET_R3_C1'].style.cursor =
        document['TICKET_R3_C2'].style.cursor =
        document['TICKET_R3_C3'].style.cursor =
        blnState = 1;
    }

}

function PlaySound(x)
{
    if (blnPlaySound == 1)
        document.applets[0].startPlay(x);
}

function NewGame()
{
    blnPlayable = 1
    blnScratching = 0
    intTileCount = 0
    intTicketValue = 0

    document.TICKETFORM.TICKETVALUE.value = intTicketValue;
    document['TICKET_R1_C1'].src = 'Games/Default/Images/Ticket_r1_
c1.gif';
    document['TICKET_R1_C2'].src = 'Games/Default/Images/Ticket_r1_
c2.gif';
    document['TICKET_R1_C3'].src = 'Games/Default/Images/Ticket_r1_
c3.gif';
    document['TICKET_R2_C1'].src = 'Games/Default/Images/Ticket_r2_
c1.gif';
    document['TICKET_R2_C2'].src = 'Games/Default/Images/Ticket_r2_
c2.gif';
    document['TICKET_R2_C3'].src = 'Games/Default/Images/Ticket_r2_
c3.gif';
    document['TICKET_R3_C1'].src = 'Games/Default/Images/Ticket_r3_
c1.gif';
    document['TICKET_R3_C2'].src = 'Games/Default/Images/Ticket_r3_
c2.gif';
    document['TICKET_R3_C3'].src = 'Games/Default/Images/Ticket_r3_
c3.gif';
```

game_source.txt

```
}

function Redeem(x)
{
    var strUncovered
    var t

    strUncovered = '';

    if (blnLocked == 0)
    {
        for (t = 1; t < 10; t++)
        {
            if (timages[t] == 1)
                strUncovered = strUncovered + 'U';
            else
                strUncovered = strUncovered + 'C';
        }
        if (x == 1)
            document.location = 'ticket.asp?ACTION=SUBMIT&V
ALUE=' + intTicketValue + '&GAME=Default&LAST=' + strTiles + '&TILES='
+ strUncovered + '&BONUS=' + blnBonus ;
        else if (intTicketValue != 0)
            document.location = 'ticket.asp?ACTION=SUBMIT&VALUE=' + intT
icketValue + '&GAME=Default&LAST=' + strTiles + '&TILES=' + strUncovere
d + '&BONUS=' + blnBonus;
        else
            alert ('You should give the game a t
ry first.');
    }
}

function ToggleSound()
{
    if (blnPlaySound == 1)
    {
        blnPlaySound = 0;
    }
    else
    {
        blnPlaySound = 1;
    }
}

</script>

</head>

<body leftmargin=0 topmargin=0 link="#000000" vlink="#000000" alink="Red"
>
<basefont face="Verdana,Arial,Helvetica size="1" color="#000000">
```

game_source.txt

```
<form action="x" NAME=TICKETFORM>

<table border=0 cellpadding=0 cellspacing=0 width='100%'>

    <tr>
        <td colspan='7' bgcolor='000000'>
            <table border=0 cellpadding=0 cellspacing=0 width='100%'>
                <tr>
                    <td nowrap><font face='Verdana, Arial, Helvetica' size='1' color='ffffff'><b>&nbsp;&nbsp;<a href="default.asp" class="toolbarlink"><font onMouseOver="this.style.color = 'Yellow'" onMouseOut="this.style.color=''">Home</font></a>&nbsp;&nbsp;|</b></font></td>

                    <td nowrap><font face='Verdana, Arial, Helvetica' size='1' color='ffffff'><b>&nbsp;&nbsp;<a href="statement.asp" class="toolbarlink"><font onMouseOver="this.style.color = 'Yellow'" onMouseOut="this.style.color=''">Account Statement</font></a>&nbs p;&nbsp;|</b></font></td>

                    <td nowrap><font face='Verdana, Arial, Helvetica' size='1' color='ffffff'><b>&nbsp;&nbsp;<a href="privacy.asp" class="toolbarlink"><font onMouseOver="this.style.color = 'Yellow'" onMouseOut="this.style.color=''">Privacy</font></a>&nbsp;&nbsp;|</b></font></td>
                    <td>&nbsp;</td>
                    <td width='100%' align='right'>
                        <font face='Verdana, Arial, Helvetica' size='1' color='ffffff'><b>|</b></font></td>
                <tr>
                    <td nowrap><font face='Verdana, Arial, Helvetica' size='1' color='ffffff'><b>&nbsp;&nbsp;<a href="default?ACTION=LOGOFF" class="toolbarlink"><font onMouseOver="this.style.color = 'Yellow'" onMouseOut="this.style.color=''">Logoff</font></a>&nb sp;&nbsp;|</b></font></td>
                    <td nowrap><font face='Verdana, Arial, Helvetica' size='1' color='ffffff'><b>&nbsp;&nbsp;<a href="http://www.eincentives.com" class="toolbarlink"><font onMouseOver="this.style.color = 'Yellow'" onMouseOut="this.style.color=''">eIncentives</font></a>&nbsp;&nbsp;|</b></font></td>
                </tr>
            </table>
        </td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
        <td colspan='7' align='center' valign='middle' nowrap>
            <font face='Verdana, Arial, Helvetica' size='6' color='c00000'>
```

game_source.txt

```

    &nbsp;&nbsp;<b>DEMO</b>&nbsp;&nbsp;
    
        </font>
    </td>
</tr>
<tr><td colspan='7'><hr size="1" color="Silver"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan='7'></td></tr>

<tr>
    <td></td>
        <td width='175' align='left' valign='top'>
            <font face='Verdana,Arial,Helvetica' size='1' color='000000'>
                <!-- Begin Left Sidebar -->

<table border=0 cellpadding=2 cellspacing=0 bgcolor='000000' width='100%'>
    <tr>
        <td align='center'>
            <font face='Verdana,Arial,Helvetica' size='1' color='ffffff'>
                <b>PLAY THE GAMES!</b>
            </font>
        </td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
        <td bgcolor='e0e0e0' align='center'>
            <font face='Verdana,Arial,Helvetica' size='1' color='000000'>&nbsp;<br>
                You have <font color='c00000'><b>10</b></font>
            chances to play.
            </font>
        </td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
        <td bgcolor='e0e0e0'>
            <font face='Verdana,Arial,Helvetica' size='1' color='808080'>
                &nbsp;<br>
                &nbsp;&nbsp;
                <a href="ticket.asp">eScratchers Game</a>
            </font>
        </td>
    </tr>
</table>
```

game_source.txt

```
<br>
 <br>
<!--
      &nbsp;&nbsp;<a href="ticket.asp?GAM
E=Compaq">Compaq Rewards</a><br>
      &nbsp;<br>
-->
      &nbsp;&nbsp;
      <a href="ticket.asp?GAME=CatAndMouse">Cat 'n' M
ouse Game</a>

      <br>
      &nbsp;<br>
      &nbsp;&nbsp;
      <a href="ticket.asp?GAME=TreasureHunt">Treasure
Hunt Game</a>

      <br>
      &nbsp;<br>
<!--
      &nbsp;&nbsp;<a href="ticket.asp?GAM
E=Rugrats">Rugrats Movie Game</a><br>
      &nbsp;<br>
      &nbsp;&nbsp;<a href="ticket.asp?GAM
E=ScoobyDoo">Scooby-Doo Game</a><br>
      &nbsp;<br>
-->
      &nbsp;&nbsp;
      <a href="ticket.asp?GAME=WWWGame">WWW Game</a>

      <br>
      &nbsp;<br>
      &nbsp;&nbsp;
      <a href="spinner.asp?GAME=Default">eSpinners Sa
mple</a>

      <p>
      </font>
</td>
</tr>
```

```
</table>

    <p>
        Thank you for registering! Our demo games are listed above. To play, simply follow a link and you will be given a ticket. Be sure to read the rules and GOOD LUCK!<p>
            <div align='center'><input type="button" name="STATEMENT" value="Account Statement" onClick="document.location='statement.asp';">&nbsp;</div><p>
                To see a detailed report of your eScratchers activity, check out your Account Statement.

            <p>
                <table border=0 cellpadding=6 cellspacing=1 bgcolor="#003399" width='100%'>
                    <tr>
                        <td bgcolor="#ffff99">
                            <font face="Verdana,Arial,Helvetica" size="1" color="#003399">
                                <b>NOTE:</b> This site is for demonstration purposes only. No actual prizes will be awarded for play.
                            </font>
                        </td>
                    </tr>
                </table>

                <applet code="AUPlayer2.class" codebase="/Java/" width="1" height="1">
                    <param name="aufile0" value="/eGames/Games/Default/Sounds/Winner.au">
                    <param name="aufile1" value="/eGames/Games/Default/Sounds/Loser.au">
                    <param name="aufile2" value="/eGames/Games/Default/Sounds/Exit.au">
                    <param name="aufile3" value="/eGames/Games/Default/Sounds/Buzzer.au">
                    <param name="aufile4" value="/eGames/Games/Default/Sounds/Button.au">
                    <param name="background" value="FFFFFF">
                    <param name="capacity" value="10">
                    <param name="foreground" value="000000">
                    <param name="height" value="1">
                    <param name="width" value="1">
                    <param name="visible" value="false">
                </applet>
```

game_source.txt

```
&nbsp;<p>
&nbsp;<p>

    <!-- End Left Sidebar -->
    </font>
</td>

    <td align='center'></td>
        <td bgcolor='c0c0c0' align='center'></td>
            <td align='center'></td>

            <td align='left' valign='top'>
                <font face='Verdana,Arial,Helvetica' size='1' c
olor='000000'>
                    <!-- Begin Page Content -->

<div align='center'>
<table border=0 cellpadding=0 cellspacing=0>
    <tr>
        <td>
            <table border=0 cellpadding=0 cellspacing=1 wid
th=400 bgcolor='000000'>
                <tr>
                    <td bgcolor='ffffff' valign='to
p' background="Games/Default/Images/bg.jpg">
                        <font face='tahoma,aria
l,helvetica' size='2' color='000000'>
                            <br>
                            <br>
                            <br>
                            <br>
                            <br>
                            <br>
                            <table border=0 cellpad
ding=1 cellspacing=1 bgcolor='000000'>
                                <tr>
                                    <td bgc
```

game_source.txt

```
olor='ffffff' align='center' valign='middle'></td>
<td bgc
olor='ffffff' align='center' valign='middle'&gt;&lt;img src="Games/Default/Images/Loser.gif" width=60 height=60 border=0&gt;&lt;/td&gt;
&lt;/tr&gt;
&lt;tr&gt;
<td nowrap align='center'&gt;&lt;font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' size='1' color='
FFFFFF'&gt;&ampnbsp;Winner&ampnbsp;&lt;/font&gt;&lt;/td&gt;
<td nowrap align='center'&gt;&lt;font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' size='1' color='
FFFFFF'&gt;&ampnbsp;Loser&ampnbsp;&lt;/font&gt;&lt;/td&gt;
&lt;/tr&gt;
&lt;/table&gt;

&lt;img src="Images/1x1_c1_r.gif" width=1 height=7 border=0 alt=""&gt;&lt;br&gt;
&lt;img src="Images/1x1_lt_gry.gif" width=150 height=1 border=0 alt=""&gt;&lt;br&gt;
&lt;img src="Images/1x1_cr_r.gif" width=1 height=5 border=0 alt=""&gt;&lt;br&gt;

&lt;b&gt;VALUE: &lt;input NAME=TICKETVALUE type="text" name="TICKETVALUE" value="0" size="2" maxlength="2"&gt; points&lt;/b&gt;&lt;br&gt;

&lt;img src="Images/1x1_cr_r.gif" width=1 height=5 border=0 alt=""&gt;&lt;br&gt;
&lt;img src="Images/1x1_cr_r.gif" width=1 height=2 border=0 alt=""&gt;&lt;br&gt;
&lt;img src="Images/contin ue.gif" width=70 height=20 border=0 alt="" onClick="SetState(1); style='cursor:hand;'&gt;&ampnbsp;&lt;img src="Images/redeem.gif" width=70 height=20 border=0 alt="" onClick="Redeem(0); style='cursor:hand;'&gt;&lt;br&gt;
&lt;img src="Images/1x1_cr_r.gif" width=1 height=3 border=0 alt=""&gt;&lt;br&gt;
&lt;img src="Images/patent .gif" width=160 height=15 border=0 alt=""&gt;&lt;br&gt;

&lt;/div&gt;
&lt;/font&gt;
&lt;/td&gt;
&lt;td&gt;
<table border=0 cellpadding=0 cellspacing=0 width='100%' bgcolor='000000'&gt;
<tr&gt;
<td&gt;&lt;img name="TICKET_R1_C1" id="TICKET_R1_C1" src="Games/Default/Images/Ticke t_r1_c1.gif" width=80 height=80 border=0 onClick="javascript:Scratch('T</pre>
```

```
ICKET_R1_C1');" style="filter:revealTrans(duration=.5, transition=21)">
</td>
                                <td><im
g name="TICKET_R1_C2" id="TICKET_R1_C2" src="Games/Default/Images/Ticke
t_r1_c2.gif" width=80 height=80 border=0 onClick="javascript:Scratch('T
ICKET_R1_C2');" style="filter:revealTrans(duration=.5, transition=21)">
</td>
                                <td><im
g name="TICKET_R1_C3" id="TICKET_R1_C3" src="Games/Default/Images/Ticke
t_r1_c3.gif" width=80 height=80 border=0 onClick="javascript:Scratch('T
ICKET_R1_C3');" style="filter:revealTrans(duration=.5, transition=21)">
</td>
                            </tr>
                            <tr>
                                <td><im
g name="TICKET_R2_C1" id="TICKET_R2_C1" src="Games/Default/Images/Ticke
t_r2_c1.gif" width=80 height=80 border=0 onClick="javascript:Scratch('T
ICKET_R2_C1');" style="filter:revealTrans(duration=.5, transition=21)">
</td>
                                <td><im
g name="TICKET_R2_C2" id="TICKET_R2_C2" src="Games/Default/Images/Ticke
t_r2_c2.gif" width=80 height=80 border=0 onClick="javascript:Scratch('T
ICKET_R2_C2');" style="filter:revealTrans(duration=.5, transition=21)">
</td>
                                <td><im
g name="TICKET_R2_C3" id="TICKET_R2_C3" src="Games/Default/Images/Ticke
t_r2_c3.gif" width=80 height=80 border=0 onClick="javascript:Scratch('T
ICKET_R2_C3');" style="filter:revealTrans(duration=.5, transition=21)">
</td>
                            </tr>
                            <tr>
                                <td><im
g name="TICKET_R3_C1" id="TICKET_R3_C1" src="Games/Default/Images/Ticke
t_r3_c1.gif" width=80 height=80 border=0 onClick="javascript:Scratch('T
ICKET_R3_C1');" style="filter:revealTrans(duration=.5, transition=21)">
</td>
                                <td><im
g name="TICKET_R3_C2" id="TICKET_R3_C2" src="Games/Default/Images/Ticke
t_r3_c2.gif" width=80 height=80 border=0 onClick="javascript:Scratch('T
ICKET_R3_C2');" style="filter:revealTrans(duration=.5, transition=21)">
</td>
                                <td><im
g name="TICKET_R3_C3" id="TICKET_R3_C3" src="Games/Default/Images/Ticke
t_r3_c3.gif" width=80 height=80 border=0 onClick="javascript:Scratch('T
ICKET_R3_C3');" style="filter:revealTrans(duration=.5, transition=21)">
</td>
                            </tr>
                        </table>
                    </td>
                </tr>
            </table>
        </td>
```

```
        <td></td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
        <td></td>
            <td></td>
        </tr>
        <tr>
            <td colspan=2 align='right'>
                <table border=0 cellpadding=0 cellspacing=0 width='100%'>
                    <tr>
                        <td align='left' valign='middle'>
                            <font face='verdana,arial,helvetica' size='1' color='000000'>
                                <input type="checkbox" value="Sound" checked onClick="ToggleSound();">
                                &nbsp;Sound On/Off
                            </font>
                        </td>
                        <td align='right' valign='middle'>
                            <font face='verdana,arial,helvetica' size='1' color='000000'>
                                &copy; 1999 <font color ='#c00000'>e</font>Incentives, LLC. All rights reserved.&nbsp;&nbsp;
                            </font>
                        </td>
                    </tr>
                </table>
            </td>
        </tr>
    </table>
<p>
<div align='center'>
<table border=0 cellpadding=2 cellspacing=1 bgcolor='#000000'>
    <tr>
        <td align='center'>
            <font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' size='1' color='ffffff'>
                <b>&nbsp;&nbsp;THIS IS YOUR TICKET NUMBER&nbsp;&nbsp;</b>
            </font>
        </td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
        <td bgcolor='ffffff' align='center'>
            <font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' size='2' color='c00000'>
```

game_source.txt

```
&nbsp;31424X3017K466a&nbsp;
</font>
</td>
</tr>
</table>
</div><p>
<table border=0 cellpadding=5 cellspacing=0 width='100%'>
    <tr>
        <td align='left' valign='top'>
            <font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' size='2' color='000000'>
                <b>Game Rules:</b><br>
                Each ticket is made up of 9 squares that can be uncovered. Each square contains either a winning or losing game piece. The more winners you can find, the higher your reward... but be careful... if you uncover a loser, the game ends and you lose all those points. You should know though, that no one goes away empty handed. Even a losing ticket is worth a small prize. For details on the awards available, see the prize legend shown here. Good Luck!
            </font>
        </td>
        <td align='left' valign='top'>
            <table border=0 cellpadding=2 cellspacing=1 bgcolor='000000'>
                <tr> <td colspan=2 align='center' nowrap>
                    <font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' size='2' color='ffffff'>
                        <b>Prize Legend:</b> </font>
                </td> <tr> <td bgcolor='e0e0e0' nowrap>
                    <font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' size='1' color='000000'>
                        <b>&nbsp;1 Winner&nbsp;</b> </font>
                </td> <td bgcolor='ffffff' nowrap>
                    <font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' size='1' color='000000'>
                        <b>&nbsp;5 points&nbsp;</b> </font>
                </td> <tr> <td bgcolor='e0e0e0' nowrap>
                    <font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' size='1' color='000000'>
                        <b>&nbsp;2-3 Winners&nbsp;</b> </font>
                </td> <td bgcolor='ffffff' nowrap>
                    <font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' size='1' color='000000'>
                        <b>&nbsp;10 points&nbsp;</b> </font>
                </td> <tr> <td bgcolor='e0e0e0' nowrap>
                    <font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' size='1' color='000000'>
                        <b>&nbsp;4-5 Winners&nbsp;</b> </font>
                </td> <td bgcolor='ffffff' nowrap>
                    <font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' size='1' color='000000'>
                        <b>&nbsp;25 points&nbsp;</b> </font>
                </td> <tr> <td bgcolor='e0e0e0' nowrap>
                    <font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' size='1' color='000000'>
                        <b>&nbsp;6 Winners&nbsp;</b> </font>
                </td> <td bgcolor='ffffff' nowrap>
                    <font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' size='1' color='000000'>
                        <b>&nbsp;50 points&nbsp;</b> </font>
                </td> <tr> <td bgcolor='e0e0e0' nowrap>
                    <font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' size='1' color='000000'>
                        <b>&nbsp;100% Reward&nbsp;</b> </font>
                </td>
            </table>
        </td>
    </tr>
</table>
```

```
ica' size='1' color='000000'> <b>&nbsp;Loser&nbsp;</b>
> </font> </td> <td bgcolor='ff
ffff' nowrap> <font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' siz
e='1' color='000000'> <b>&nbsp;5 points&nbsp;</b>
</font> </td> </tr></table>
</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td align='left' valign='top' colspan='2'>
<font face='tahoma,arial,helvetica' size='2' co
lor='000000'>
As you proceed through the game, the current va
lue of the ticket is shown to you on the left side. Just below is a but
ton which allows to to redeem the ticket. At any time during your game
play, you can "cash out" by clicking this button. So, play it safe or g
o for the big prize! It's up to you. Remember to redeem your ticket at
the end!
</font>
</td>
</tr>
</table>
<p>
</div>

<script>
document.TICKETFORM.TICKETVALUE.value = intTicketValue;
SetState(2);
</script>

&nbsp;<p>
&nbsp;<p>

<!-- End Page Content -->
</font>
</td>

<td></td> .

</tr>

<tr><td colspan='7'></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan='7'><hr size="1" color="Silver"></td></tr>
<tr>
<td colspan='2' align=center valign=middle>
<font face='Verdana,Arial,Helvetica' size='1' c
olor='000000'>
<!--
<table border=0 cellpadding=0 cellspacing=0>
```

game_source.txt

```
<tr>
    <td bgcolor="#ffffffff"><img src=
"Images/1x1_clr.gif" width=10 height=10 border=0 alt=""></td>
    <td bgcolor="#c0c0c0"><img src=
"Images/1x1_clr.gif" width=10 height=10 border=0 alt=""></td>
    <td bgcolor="#808080"><img src=
"Images/1x1_clr.gif" width=10 height=10 border=0 alt=""></td>
    <td bgcolor="#404040"><img src=
"Images/1x1_clr.gif" width=10 height=10 border=0 alt=""></td>
    <td bgcolor="#101010"><img src=
"Images/1x1_clr.gif" width=10 height=10 border=0 alt=""></td>
    <td bgcolor="#000000"><img src=
"Images/1x1_clr.gif" width=10 height=10 border=0 alt=""></td>
    <td></td>
    <td bgcolor="#0099ff"><img src=
"Images/1x1_clr.gif" width=10 height=10 border=0 alt=""></td>
    <td bgcolor="#ff0099"><img src=
"Images/1x1_clr.gif" width=10 height=10 border=0 alt=""></td>
    <td bgcolor="Yellow"><img src=
"Images/1x1_clr.gif" width=10 height=10 border=0 alt=""></td>
    <td bgcolor="#660099"><img src=
"Images/1x1_clr.gif" width=10 height=10 border=0 alt=""></td>
    <td bgcolor="#00cc00"><img src=
"Images/1x1_clr.gif" width=10 height=10 border=0 alt=""></td>
    <td bgcolor="#ff3333"><img src=
"Images/1x1_clr.gif" width=10 height=10 border=0 alt=""></td>
</tr>
</table>
-->
        &nbsp;
    </font>
</td>
    <td colspan='5' align='right' valign=middle><font face=
'Verdana,Arial,Helvetica' size='1' color='000000'>&copy; 1999 <font col
or='c00000'>e</font>Incentives, LLC. All rights reserved.&nbsp;&n
bsp;&nbsp;</font></td>
</tr>

</table>
&nbsp;<p>
&nbsp;<p>

</form>

</body>
</html>
```

CLAIMS

1. A computerized method of playing a game, the method comprising the step of creating a virtual game ticket capable of becoming a winning ticket and capable of becoming a losing ticket depending upon which of a plurality of game segments a player selects.
2. The computerized method of claim 1 wherein the creating step includes designating each game segment one of winner segment and a loser segment before selection thereof by the game player.
3. The computerized method of claim 2 further comprising the step of designating the game ticket a losing ticket once a threshold number of loser segments is selected by the game player.
4. The computerized method of claim 3 further comprising the step of designating the game ticket a winning ticket once at least one winner segment has been selected and said threshold number of loser segments has not been selected.
5. The computerized method of claim 4 further comprising the step of awarding points to winning tickets based upon the number of winner segments selected by the game player.
6. The computerized method of claim 3 further comprising the step of automatically redeeming said game ticket when one of the following occurs: the threshold number of loser segments is selected by the game player; all winner segments are selected by the game player; the game player initiates redemption of the game ticket.
7. The computerized method of claim 2 further comprising the step of requiring the game player to indicate a desire to continue play of the game ticket before another game segment can be selected.
8. The computerized method of claim 2 wherein the creating step includes identifying a predetermined sequence in which the game segments can be selected and the designating steps include designating each game segment one of a winner segment and a loser segment as a function of whether said game segments are selected by the player according to said sequence.

9. The computerized method of claim 2 further comprising the step of revealing each unselected game segment as one of a winner segment and a loser segment when play of the game ticket is terminated.

10. The computer system of claim 9 wherein the revealing step includes graphically distinguishing the unselected game segments from the selected game segments.

11. A computer system configured to run a computer game, said computer game comprising a virtual game ticket having a plurality of game segments selectable by a player of the computer game, said game ticket being capable of becoming a winning ticket and capable of becoming a losing ticket, depending upon which of said game segments the
5 player selects.

12. The computer system of claim 11 further configured to designate each game segment one of a winner segment and a loser segment before selection thereof by the game player.

13. The computer system of claim 12 further configured to designate said game ticket a losing ticket when a threshold number of loser segments is selected by the game player.

14. The computer system of claim 13 wherein said threshold number is one.

15. The computer system of claim 13 further configured to designate said game ticket a winning ticket when at least one winner segment is selected and said threshold number of loser segments has not been selected by the game player.

16. The computer system of claim 15 further configured to award points to winning tickets based upon the number of winner segments selected by the game player.

17. The computer system of claim 16 further configured to display an awards legend along with said game ticket.

18. The computer system of claim 13 wherein the game ticket remains in a playable state until one of the following occurs: the threshold number of loser segments is selected by the game player; all the winner segments are selected by the game player; the game ticket is redeemed.

19. The computer system of claim 18 further configured to redeem the game ticket when one of the following occurs: the threshold number of loser segments is selected by the game player; all winner segments are selected by the game player; the game player initiates redemption of the game ticket.

20. The computer system of claim 12 further configured to require the game player to indicate a desire to continue play of the game ticket before another game segment can be selected.

21. The computer system of claim 12 wherein said computer system is connected to a distributed computer network for enabling use of said system by one or more geographically remote players.

22. The computer system of claim 21 wherein said computer system is part of a computerized promotions or incentives program.

23. The computer system of claim 12 further configured to identify a predetermined sequence in which the game segments can be selected, and to designate each game segment one of a winner segment and a loser segment as a function of whether said game segments are selected by the player according to said sequence.

24. A computerized method of playing a computer game comprising a virtual game ticket having a plurality of game segments selectable by a game player, said method including the step of requiring the game player to indicate a desire to continue play of the game ticket before another game segment can be selected.

25. The computerized method of claim 24 wherein the game segments are selectable by the game player using a pointer and the game player is required to remove said pointer from an area comprising said game segments to indicate said desire.

26. The computerized method of claim 24 wherein said game ticket includes a button adjacent to an area comprising said game segments and the game player is required to select said button to indicate said desire.

27. A method of creating a virtual game ticket having a plurality of game segments selectable by a player of the game, the method comprising the step of creating said game ticket only after play of the game ticket is initiated by the game player.

28. The method of claim 27 further comprising the steps of randomly selecting one of said game segments and assigning a prize symbol to the selected game segment.

29. The method of claim 28 further comprising the steps of computing odds for the selected game segment, generating a random number, and comparing the odds with the random number to identify the prize symbol to be assigned to the selected game segment.

30. The method of claim 29 further comprising the step of comparing the prize symbol assignment with a game structure for said virtual game ticket to determine whether said game structure has been violated.

31. The method of claim 27 wherein the selecting and assigning steps are repeated until a prize symbol has been assigned to each of said plurality of game segments.

32. The method of claim 31 wherein the prize symbols are assigned to all of said plurality of game segments before any of the game segments are selected by the game player.

33. A gaming method comprising the steps of:
accepting a wager from a player;
displaying a virtual game ticket to the player, the game ticket having a plurality of game segments selectable by the player, the game ticket being capable of becoming a winning ticket and capable of becoming a losing ticket depending upon which of the plurality of game segments the player selects;
permitting the player to select at least one of the game segments;
determining whether the game ticket is a winning ticket or a losing ticket based upon which of the plurality of game segments the user selected; and
10 paying an award to the player in the event that the game ticket is determined to be a winning ticket.

34. The gaming method of claim 33 wherein the accepting step includes allowing the player to select the amount of the wager.

35. The gaming method of claim 34 wherein the accepting step includes allowing the player to select the amount of the wager within a predetermined range of wagers.

36. The method of claim 33 wherein the award is a monetary award, the method further comprising the step of calculating the monetary award based at least in part on the amount of the wager.

37. The gaming method of claim 33 further comprising the step of designating each game segment either a winner segment or a loser segment.

38. The gaming method of claim 37 wherein the determining step includes designating the game ticket a losing ticket once a threshold number of loser segments is selected by the player.

39. The gaming method of claim 38 wherein the determining step includes designating the game ticket a winning ticket once a threshold number of winner segments has been selected and the threshold number of loser segments has not been selected.

40. The gaming method of claim 38 further comprising the step of allowing the player to choose whether to accept the award or continue playing after one of the game segments designated a winner segment is selected and the threshold number of loser segments has not been selected.

41. The gaming method of claim 40 wherein the award is a monetary award, the method further comprising the step of determining the monetary award based at least in part on the number of winner segments selected by the player.

42. The gaming method of claim 38 further comprising the step of paying a nominal award to the player once the game ticket is designated a losing ticket.

43. The gaming method of claim 38 further comprising the step of automatically redeeming the game ticket when one of the following occurs: the threshold number of loser segments is selected by the game player; all winner segments are selected by the game player; the game player initiates redemption of the game ticket.

44. The gaming method of claim 37 further comprising the steps of identifying a predetermined sequence in which the game segments can be selected, and designating each game segment one of a winner segment and a loser segment as a function of whether the game segments are selected by the player according to the predetermined sequence.

45. The gaming method of claim 33 wherein the wager is a monetary wager, the method further comprising the step of collecting payment from the player for the monetary wager.

46. A gaming device comprising:

- a display unit;
- a mechanism for receiving credits from a player of the system;
- at least one memory element having computer instructions stored therein;
- 5 a processor for implementing the computer instructions stored in the memory element, the computer instructions configuring the device for accepting a monetary wager from the player, and for displaying on the display unit a virtual game ticket having a plurality of game segments selectable by the player, the game ticket being capable of becoming a winning ticket and capable of becoming a losing ticket depending upon which 10 of the plurality of game segments the player selects;
- a user input device through which the player can select at least one of the plurality of game segments; and
- a mechanism for paying an award to the player in the event the virtual game ticket is determined to be a winning ticket.

47. The gaming device of claim 46 wherein the memory element is a read-only memory (ROM) element.

48. The gaming device of claim 46 wherein the device is connected to a central computer over a computer network.

49. The gaming device of claim 48 wherein the memory element is a random access memory (RAM) element and the instructions are provided to the gaming device by the central computer through the computer network.

50. The gaming device of claim 46 wherein the mechanism for receiving monetary credits is selected from the group consisting of credit card readers, coin mechanisms, dollar bill readers, and smart card readers.

51. A computerized gaming system, said system being configured for accepting a wager from a player of the system, and for displaying to the player a virtual game ticket, the virtual game ticket being capable of becoming a winning ticket and capable of becoming a losing ticket depending upon which of the plurality of game segments the player selects, the gaming system being further configured for determining whether the game ticket is a winning ticket based upon which of the plurality of game segments the player selects, and for paying an award to the player in the event the game ticket is determined to be a winning ticket.

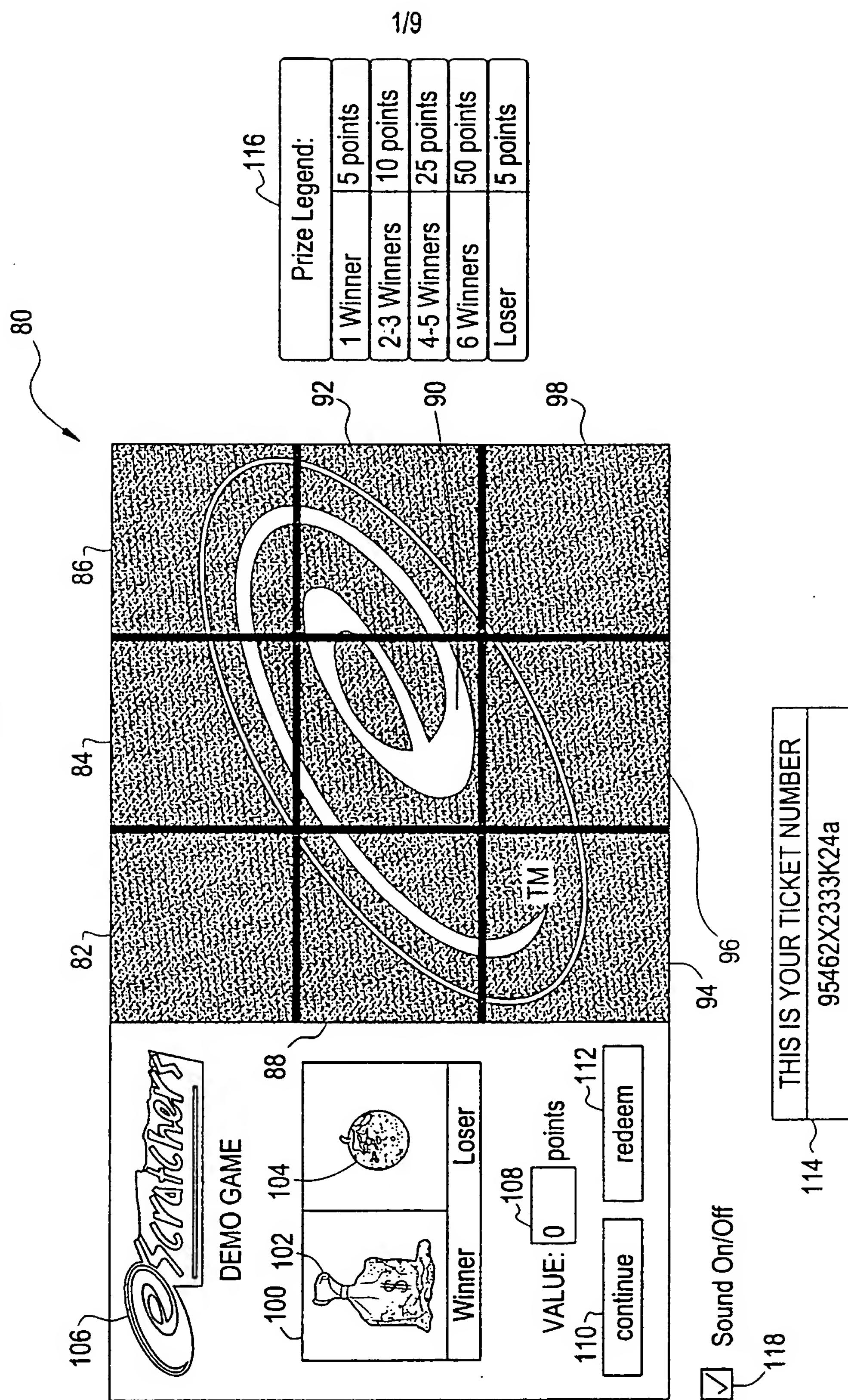
52. The gaming system of claim 51 wherein the system includes at least one host computer and at least one remote computer in communication with the host computer, the host computer being configured for displaying the virtual game ticket to the player via the remote computer.

53. The gaming system of claim 51 wherein the system is configured for use by multiple players at the same time.

54. The gaming system of claim 53 wherein the system is configured for assigning and displaying to each of the multiple players a unique virtual game ticket, each virtual game ticket being capable of becoming a winning ticket and capable of becoming a losing ticket depending upon which of the plurality of game segments the player assigned thereto selects, the gaming system being further configured for determining, for each virtual game ticket, whether that game ticket is a winning ticket based upon which of the plurality of game segments the player assigned thereto selects, and for paying an award to each player that is assigned to a game ticket which becomes a winning ticket.

55. The gaming system of claim 51 wherein the system is configured for processing credit card information provided by the player as payment for the monetary wager.

FIG. 1



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FIG. 2

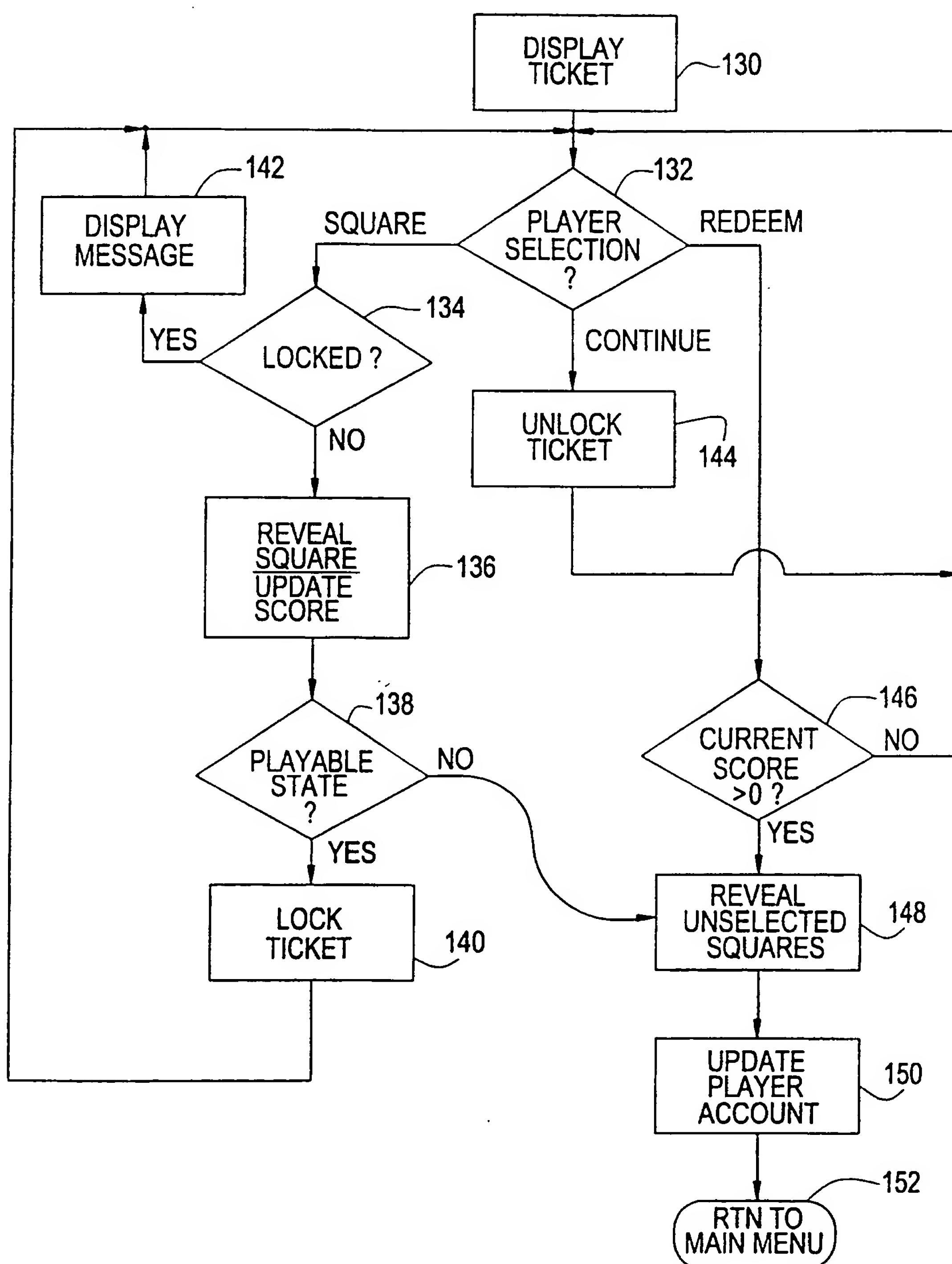


FIG. 3

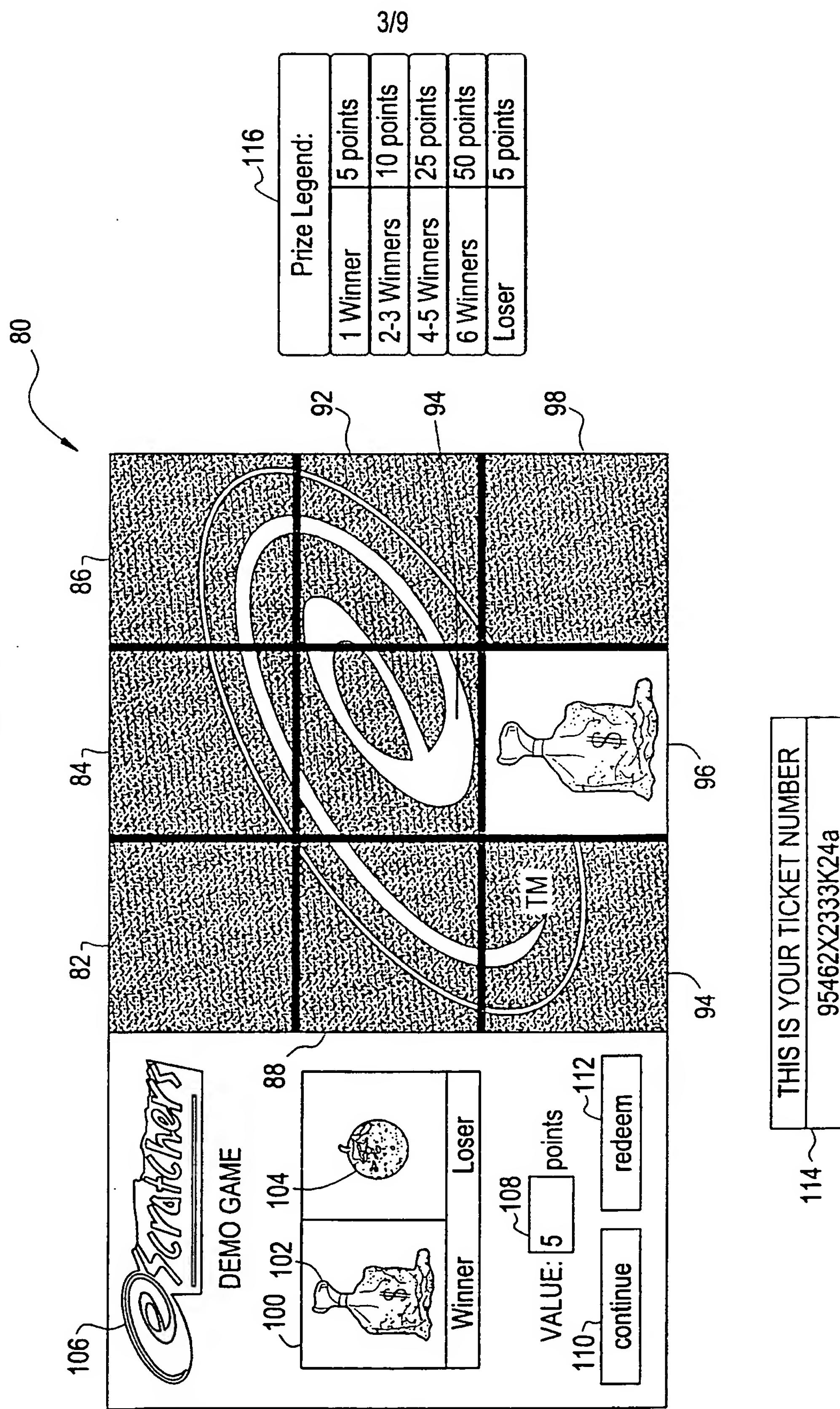


FIG. 4

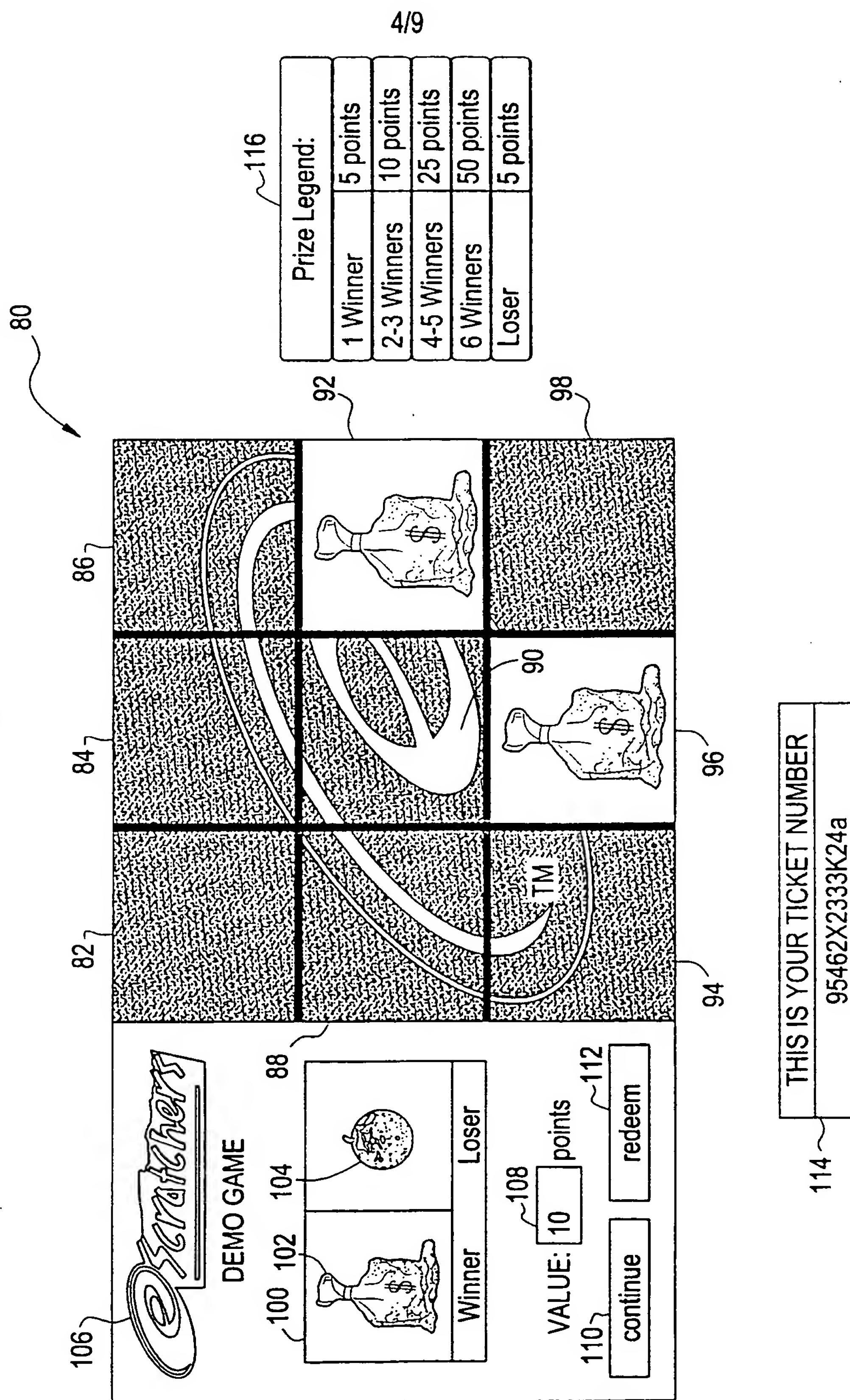


FIG. 5

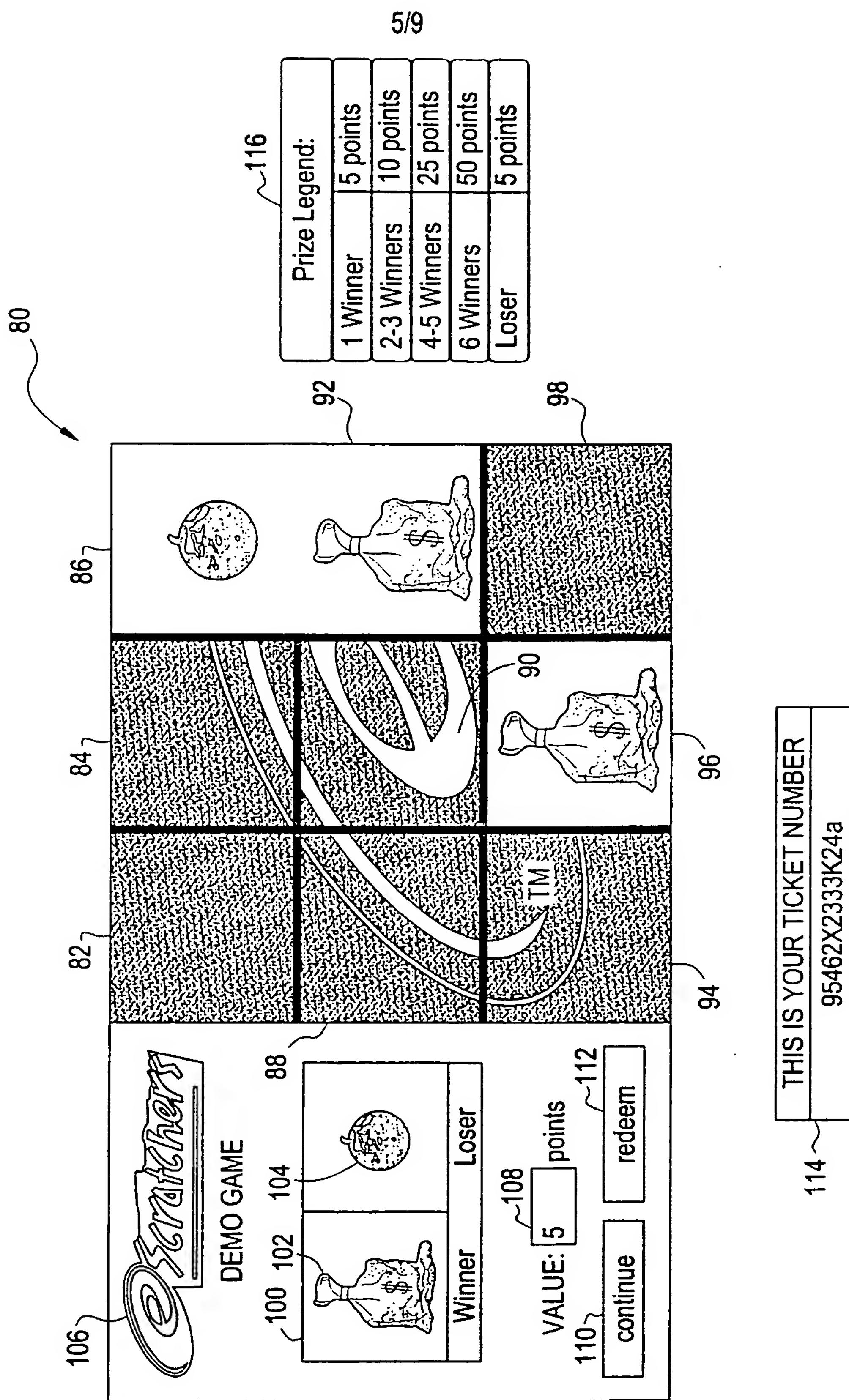


FIG. 6

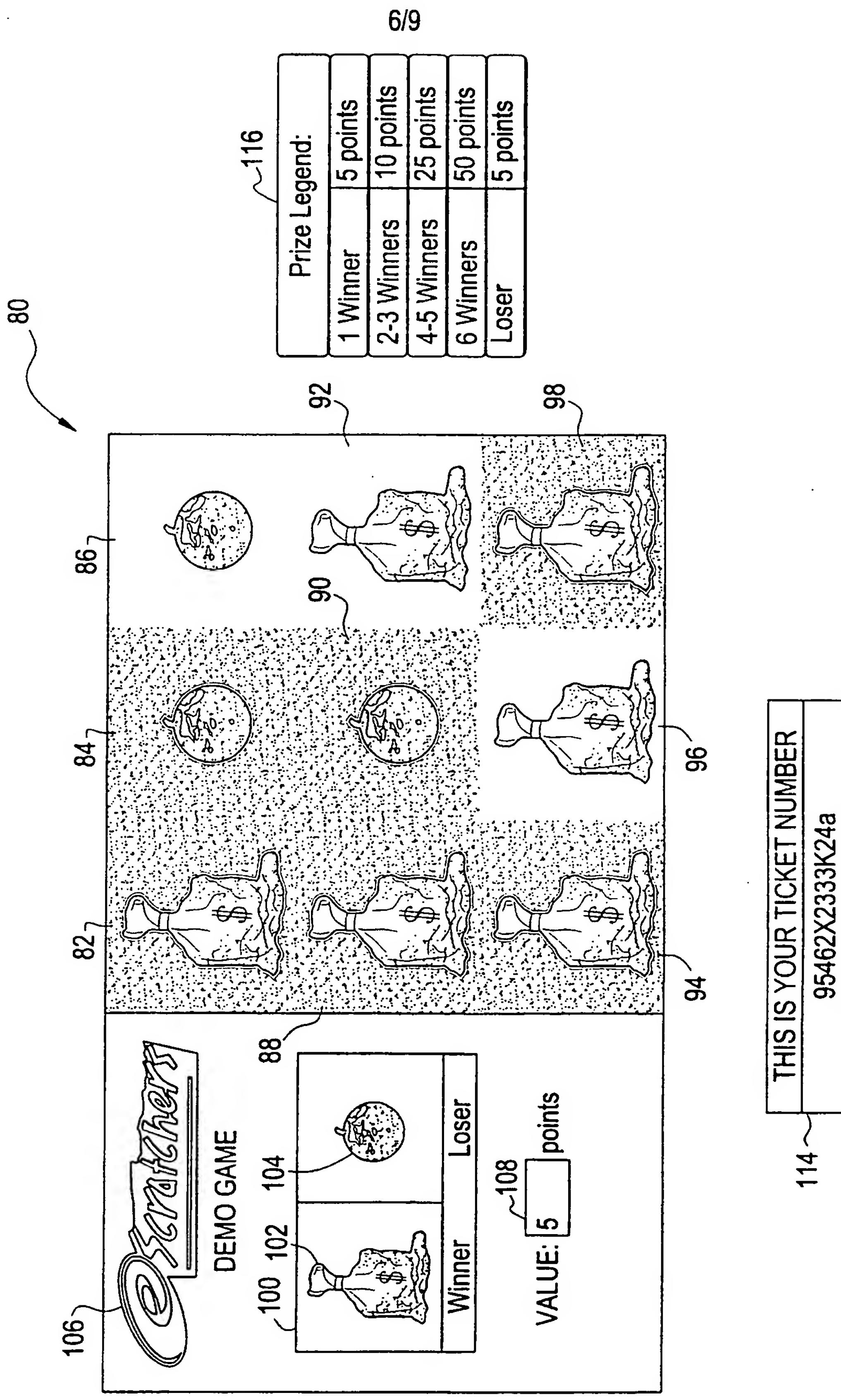
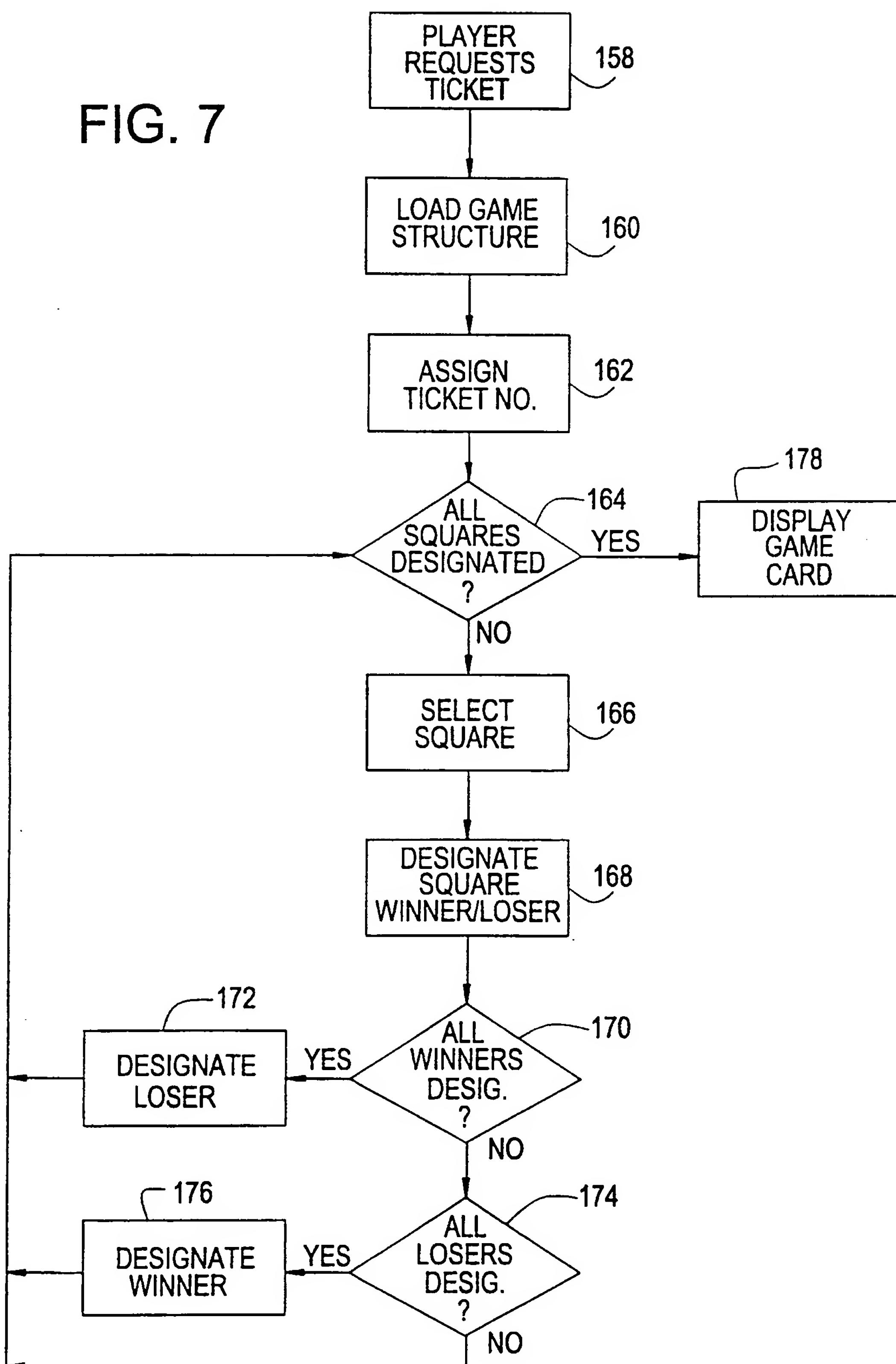


FIG. 7



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FIG. 8

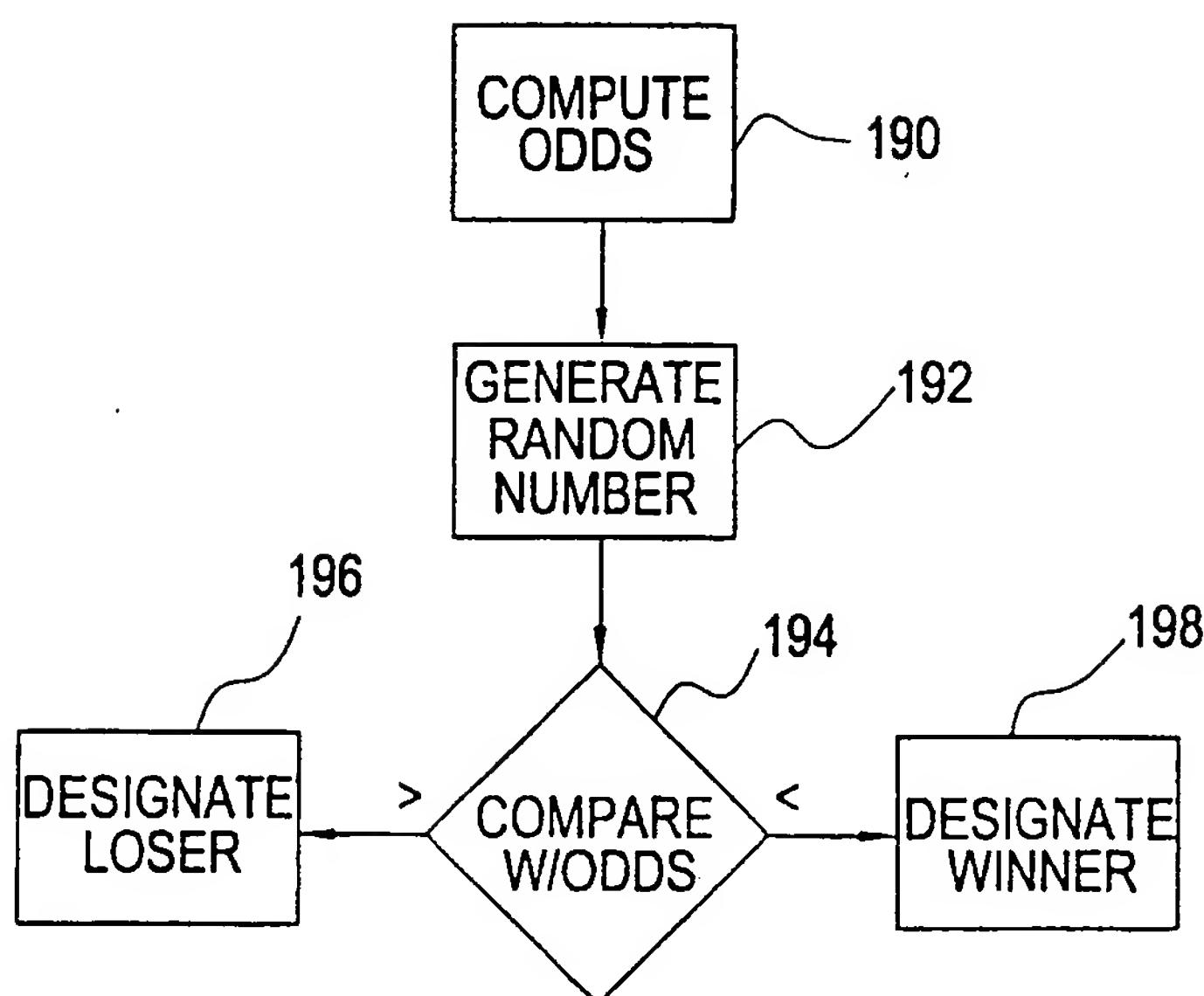
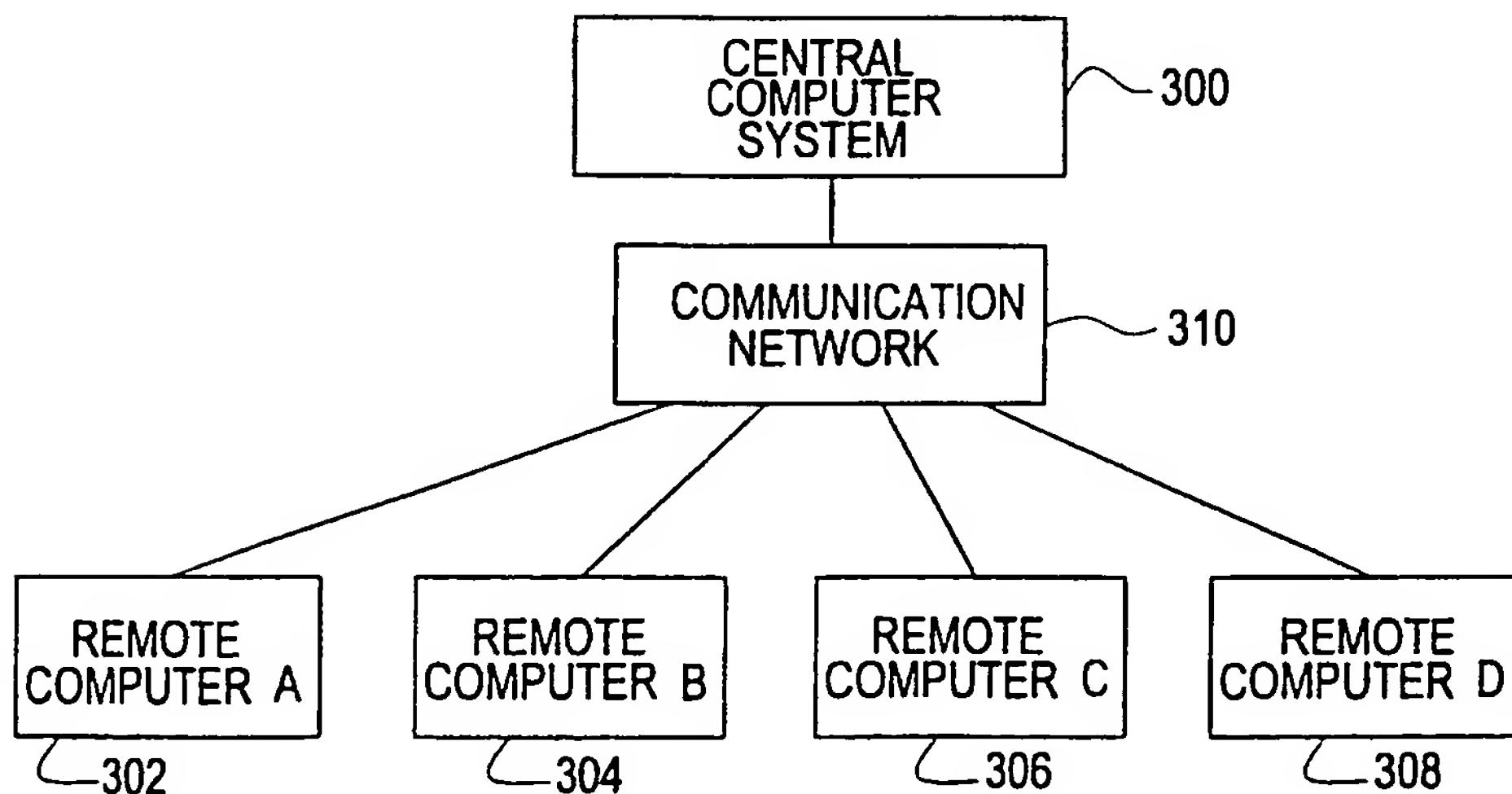


FIG. 10

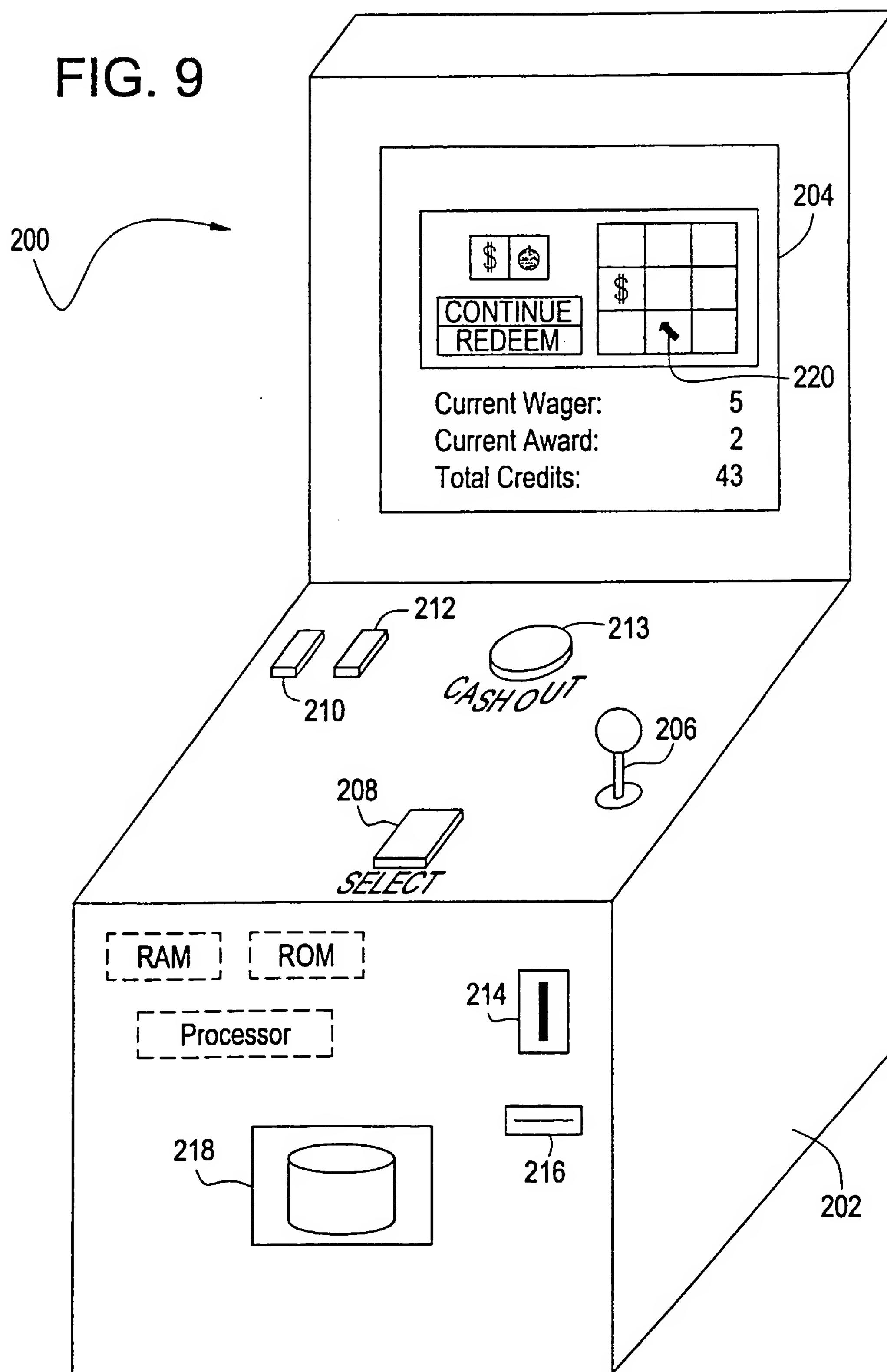
WAGER:	1 COIN	2 COINS	3 COINS	4 COINS	5 COINS
1 WINNER	—	—	—	1	2
2-3 WINNERS	1	1	1	2	5
4-5 WINNERS	5	5	10	15	25
6 WINNERS	10	15	25	50	100

FIG. 11



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FIG. 9



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Internat' Application No
PCT/US 00/23238

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 A63F3/06 G07F17/32

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 A63F G07F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5 569 082 A (KAYE) 29 October 1996 (1996-10-29) column 3, line 33 -column 4, line 52 column 9, line 29 -column 10, line 43 claims 1,7-10,16,17 ---	11-23, 46-55
X	US 5 407 199 A (GUMINA) 18 April 1995 (1995-04-18) column 4, line 58 - line 63 column 5, line 34 - line 51 -----	11,46,51

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

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"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

14 November 2000

Date of mailing of the international search report

21/11/2000

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Raybould, B

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

Internal Application No

PCT/US 00/23238

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		JP	11510400 T	14-09-1999
		WO	9631832 A	10-10-1996
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